

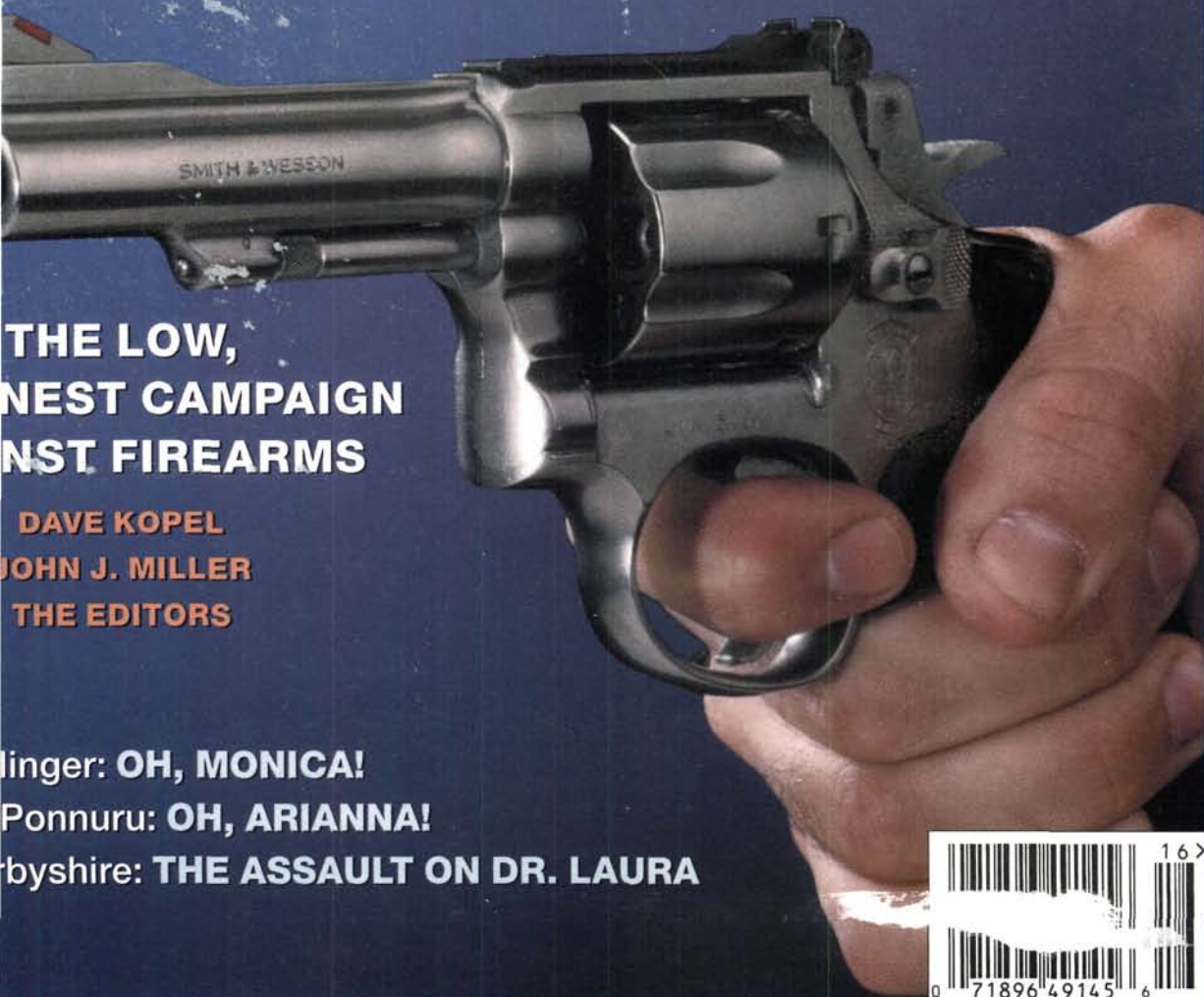
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The Unintended Consequences of Price Controls

By John E. Calfee

The United States is the only OECD country that does not impose some form of price controls on prescription drugs, and some American policy-makers argue that their country should adopt this approach as well. The question that must be considered is: what is the effect of such controls? In a new study for the American Enterprise Institute, I examined the potential impact of controls on a number of factors, ranging from investment in innovation to consumer access to new therapies. The evidence suggests that price controls on prescription drugs would have some significant unintended consequences. Despite the apparent popularity of price controls, the potential harms from controls are far more varied and extensive than most people realize, mainly because those harms are either difficult to predict in advance or are hidden from view once they occur.

First, there is the effect on investment in research and development. Advocates of price controls often say they wish to establish "reasonable" pharmaceutical prices or profits without impeding the development of useful new pharmaceuticals. This is a well-meaning sentiment, but it leads down an extremely dangerous path. No one can know what would be a "reasonable" reward for solving research problems that have remained unsolved for decades. Who knows how much a breast cancer cure is worth, and what it will cost? Yet that is precisely what firms have to know or at least they have to know what the government will later determine to be a reasonable level of profits for breakthrough drugs yet to be developed. Pharmaceutical firms facing price controls

A world of ideas on public policy.

would be reluctant to gamble a billion dollars in a highly uncertain search for a breast cancer cure because they would believe that, if and when they were to beat the long odds against success, a government agency might decide that the drug's price is too high.

It is true that some price control regimes attempt to set higher prices for more innovative drugs. However, that approach requires price controllers to outguess the market in deciding which research areas are most promising and which new types of drugs would be most useful an impossible task, because regulators cannot possibly have access to as much information, as quickly, as a free market could generate. The astonishing pace of innovation in contemporary pharmaceutical research makes the regulator's task even more difficult.

Price control regimes also fail to reward further discovery as to the value of existing therapies. Fixed prices ignore the costs and benefits of new research on old drugs. Such remarkable successes as the statin-class cholesterol-reducing drugs and the clotbuster tPA, found some of their most important uses as a result of large-scale clinical trials executed by their manufacturers after the drugs were already in use.

Second, there is the impact on competition. Wherever there are price controls, powerful parties learn to work the controls system to their advantage and the disadvantage of competitors. Pharmaceutical price controls in Japan and to a lesser extent in France are designed in part to protect domestic pharmaceutical manufacturers at the expense of foreign competitors, without regard to the relative value of the products being marketed. These arrangements work to the disadvantage of consumers, particularly in Japan where many of the most effective drug therapies for cancer, heart disease, and other conditions are simply unavailable.

Even when they are designed to protect local industry, price controls end up crippling domestic companies, by distorting incentives and creating an environment that is unfriendly to companies that pursue risky research in search of breakthrough therapies. In countries ruled by price controls, research by local pharmaceutical companies tends to be curtailed or channeled into lines far less challenging than those that yielded the remarkable advances of the past two decades.

The evidence suggests that price controls on prescription drugs have some significant unintended consequences.

Those harms are largely invisible to the public in these countries. Worse, price controls systems tend to persist, despite their destructive consequences, because pharmaceutical firms, healthcare providers and healthcare funding agencies can learn to live with and even benefit from a system that reliably protects profits and discourages new entrants, while assuring stability in prices and expenditures. Meanwhile, cutting edge scientists and venture capital quietly retreat in their work on pharmaceuticals for the elderly – to cite one important area – and move on to more profitable arenas.

All this penalizes patients who gain the most from new pharmaceuticals and must therefore lose the most when new drugs fail to appear.

John E. Calfee is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) in Washington, D.C., USA. This essay is adapted from his monograph *Prices, Markets, and the Pharmaceutical Revolution*. To order a copy, please see the AEI website at www.aei.org or call +(202) 862 5800.

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■ LETTERS ■

DISPARITIES—IN INCOME AND SCHOLARSHIP

In a recent article, Stephen Moore asserts that a study of widening income disparities we recently issued with the Economic Policy Institute is "more propaganda than scholarship" ("The Haves and the Have-Lesses," March 6). Our conclusions are confirmed, however, by the work of respected scholars. It is Mr. Moore's critique that is based on exceedingly shaky "scholarship."

An array of highly respected mainstream economists has documented the widening of income gaps since the 1970s. Mr. Moore's efforts to dismiss these trends contain serious flaws. For example, in attempting to show that income disparities narrowed in 1998, he cites changes in three statistics, despite the fact that none of these changes was statistically significant. Presenting what scholars regard as no change as being a real change is the sort of practice that ranks as propaganda, not scholarship.

Similarly, Mr. Moore "demonstrates" that poor families are much better off now than 20 years ago by comparing their incomes in 1980, a recession year, to 1998, a year well into the current expansion. He ignores the standard scholarly practice of comparing similar points in the business cycle, which would show that the average real income of families in the bottom fifth actually declined by \$686 between 1979 and 1998. (If households, rather than families, are tracked, the change between 1979 and 1998 is a small \$161 increase.) Even for 1980–1998, the figures he provides are inaccurate.

Mr. Moore also greatly overstates the degree to which those who are poor in a given year experience increases in income over time. He ignores the leading scholarly work on this subject and relies instead on a study that has been largely discredited as a measure of mobility because it was limited to people who paid income taxes every year for ten straight years, excluding about half the nation's households from the study. This approach greatly exaggerated mobility.

The distinction between scholarship and propaganda is important, and Mr. Moore's article falls in the less reputable of those categories.

Robert Greenstein

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

Washington, D.C.

STEPHEN MOORE REPLIES: Robert Greenstein's

letter is a masterly job of obfuscation. Yes, we all agree that income disparities grew in the 1970s and the 1980s. As Greenstein himself says, this story has been studied and regurgitated to death. We also all agree that the period 1978–81 was the worst four-year period in American history for family incomes. But what is absolutely untrue is the dishonest claim by Greenstein's think tank that the income gap has widened. The Census Bureau says that in the 1990s the income gap has not grown at all, and that last year the gap actually shrank. Yes, it was a very tiny narrowing, as I noted in my article. But I would leave it to fair-minded readers to decide for themselves whether a study that announces to the world a widening of the income gap is truthful when the data show that for at least the last three years the gap has not widened at all.

THE RISING-TIDE STRATEGY

In the wake of John McCain's primary campaign, NATIONAL REVIEW suggests that Gov. Bush needs "to attract more clearly defined groups, groups that may not even have existed when Ronald Reagan created the present Republican coalition" ("The Week," April 3). This is bad advice. Reagan did not attempt to attract "clearly defined groups." Had Reagan sought to identify groups and create a message to attract them as distinct groups he would not have created an enduring coalition. Let's grant the Democratic party a monopoly on that kind of pandering. Conservatism is best served if we stick to long-standing principles, pursue policies that reflect those principles, and, as Reagan often advised, let the "rising tide lift all boats."

Steve Scruggs

Charlotte, N.C.

IN APPRECIATION

A belated thanks for your paragraph about Max Eastman ("The Week," Feb. 7). I saw NATIONAL REVIEW for the first time in 1964 or '65, while I was taking a study break in my college library. By chance, one of the first things I read was an item by Eastman, claiming that an agnostic could argue the conservative case more convincingly than a believer. When I learned that NR's founder was Catholic, I knew that I had discovered an intelligent and fair publication. I have been reading NR ever since.

Joe B. Gambill

Dallas, Tex.



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■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ President **Clinton**, on contention by NRA's **Wayne LaPierre** that he has "blood on his hands" for not enforcing existing gun laws: "I got a little tickled over the weekend when they got a little rough with me. I mean, I have so much scar tissue now, I can't even feel it. So it's totally immaterial to me what they say. And that should not be an issue for any of you."

■ Rasmussen Research's state-by-state poll of 25,000 likely voters shows **George W. Bush** edging Vice President **Gore** in electoral-college count, 207-198, with 133 still considered toss-ups. . . . Poll's big surprise is Gore leading Bush in Florida, 43 percent to 37 percent. . . . Gore began March with more cash than Bush, for first time in presidential race. . . . *Washington Post* unearths Gore's Harvard transcript, discovers he earned a D in natural-sciences class on "Man's Place in Nature," a C+ in senior-year natural-sciences course, and an IQ score of 134. . . . Left-wing House Democrats, led by Rep. **David Bonior** (Mich.), urge Gore to pick Rep. **Bob Menendez** (N.J.) as running mate. . . . Days after Gore campaign announced endorsement by **John McCain's** "Mississippi state director," *New York Times* reveals McCain never had one. . . . Gore on campaign-finance reform: "I may be an imperfect messenger for this cause." . . . Gore campaign aide arrested for drunk driving in Nashville tells police officer she works for vice president, threatens to report officer to U.S. district attorney, says *Tennessean*.

■ New Democrat **Will Marshall** of Progressive Policy Institute, on Bush's education record, in Knight Ridder interview: "Test scores have been rising, and the achievements of low-income and minority students have been rising. Campaign hyperbole aside, Texas has one of the best accountability systems in the country." . . . McCain promises to campaign vigorously for House Republicans. . . . **Colin Powell** says he's not interested in vice presidency, doesn't rule out cabinet post. . . . Voter.com poll suggests adding McCain to GOP ticket

doesn't help Bush. . . . Rep. **Chris Cox** (R., Calif.) introduces bill to repeal Clinton-Gore's 4.3 cent gas-tax increase. . . . **Dan Quayle** takes job at Denver-based investment bank JD Ford & Company, will work out of Phoenix office.

■ **Hillary Clinton**, in *New York* magazine: "There is nothing anybody can say about me that will hurt my feelings. I cannot be insulted. You know? I just can't be." . . . Sen. **Mitch McConnell** (R., Ky.), on predictions GOP will lose Senate seats, in *New York Times*: "A reasonable surmise." . . . Federation for American Immigration Reform spends \$150,000 on radio ads knocking vulnerable Sen. **Spencer Abraham** (R.,



"You needn't be concerned about it, sir—the government destroyed my incentive years ago."

Mich.) for pro-immigration views. . . . Sen. **John Ashcroft** (R., Mo.) promises to serve only one more term if re-elected. . . . "We can't rely on the presidential nominee," says Rep. **J. C. Watts** (R., Okla.), in *Roll Call*. "There's no coattails at this time." . . . **Charlie Cook**, in *National Journal*: "An analysis of each of the 435 districts suggests that the outcome in November will probably range between a Republican gain of three seats to a Democratic gain of five, one seat short of a majority." . . . Rep. **Patrick Kennedy** (D., R.I.) on his family name, in *USA Today*: "I'm, like, in awe of the fact that I get to carry this legacy." . . . Popularity of New Mexico Gov. **Gary Johnson** (R.) plummets following support last year for drug legalization, with 44 percent disapproving and 35 percent approving of job performance. . . . As White House promises to increase for-

eign aid, pro-life congressmen, led by Rep. **Todd Tiahrt** (R., Kan.), call for investigation of claims that Peru uses U.S. money to force women to undergo sterilizations and abortions. . . . **Patrick Buchanan** at Harvard University: "The party of Ronald Reagan is dead; its successor is little more than the bellhop stand of the Business Roundtable."

■ Census Bureau apologizes after research paper reveals agency provided information on Japanese Americans during World War II internment actions, despite decades of denying it. . . . Convicted murderer **Jack Kevorkian** wins \$100,000 "citizen activist" award from Gleitsman Foundation. . . . Women may outnumber men among first-year law students in fall, says American Bar Association. . . . Pro-lifers in Minnesota block bust honoring *Roe v. Wade* author **Harry Blackmun** from state capitol. . . . Major-league baseball closes lobbying office in Washington.

■ Canadian foreign minister **Lloyd Axworthy** claims Ottawa has veto power over U.S. missile-defense plans. . . . Greek Communists hurl rocks at Marines en route to Kosovo. . . . Pakistani judge orders serial killer responsible for murder of 100 children to be strangled, cut into pieces, and thrown into acid (as he had his victims). . . . Germany's three biggest banks refuse credit to Christian Democrats following corruption scandal. . . . Iraqi gas, oil smuggling, aided by Iran, may be worth \$1 billion. . . . British prime minister **Tony Blair** may take paternity leave when his fourth child is born in May. . . . President of leading women's group in Canada, National Action Committee on the Status of Women, admits at least 50 percent of members are lesbians. . . . Overweight police officers in northern Philippines ordered to climb Mt. Pinatubo once a month.

■ **Gerald Ford**, on ABC's *This Week*, warns GOP: "Unless they move back into the middle, and have a big-tent philosophy, they'll continue to lose the White House." Ford knows a thing or two about losing the White House. **NR**

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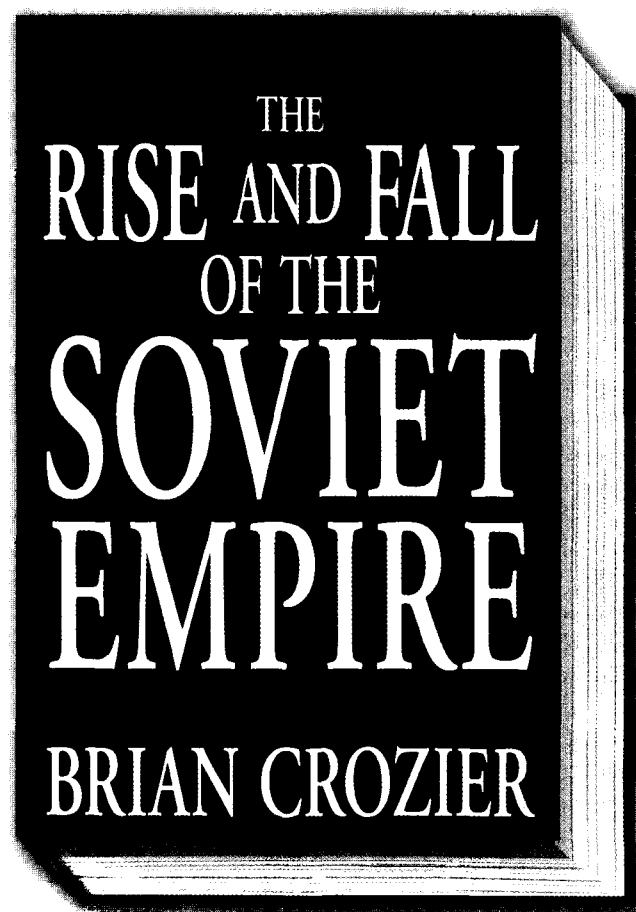
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THE WEEK

■ Tony Blair may take “paternity leave” when his wife gives birth in May. Good thing he doesn’t have an empire to run.

■ The *New York Times* spanked George W. Bush for not kowtowing to John McCain in a post-primaries interview. “Bush Rebuffs Bid to Embrace Views Pushed by McCain,” ran the scandalized headline. Why Bush, who united his party against McCain’s ideas, should now rush to adopt them was left unclear. In different circumstances, what the *Times* was urging Bush to do would be called a “flip-flop.” Which, in any case, is probably the wrong way to woo McCain voters. They do not form a coherent bloc or “movement,” and they consistently told pollsters that they were drawn to McCain’s personal qualities, principally his willingness to stand up for his beliefs. Bush should stand up for his own, even if “straight talk” is suddenly less popular at the *New York Times*.

■ What Hillary Clinton wanted to do with health care in 1993, Al Gore is now proposing for the American system of elections—he wants to socialize it, bringing it under the heel of bureaucrats and government commissions. Gore’s plan is a laughably obvious play for the fabled “McCain voters.” It shares with McCain’s proposals the premise that American politics suffers from too much politics, but takes this idea much closer to its logical conclusion. Gore proposes a \$7 billion nonpartisan “Democracy Endowment”—run by presidential appointees approved by the Senate—that would be built with tax-deductible contributions, then divvied up among House and Senate candidates who agree to accept no other funding. The idea is to shield candidates from the influence of political parties, interest groups, and individual donors—in other words, from democratic pressure. This is the liberal regulatory state at its absolute worst.

■ But Gore does have a sense of humor, or at least some good joke writers. At the recent annual Gridiron Club dinner in Washington, Gore got off some good ones. Referring to his Washington, D.C., upbringing, he said, “I have to admit I feel a little out of my element here, but I suppose it’s good for me to get out of Nashville every now and then.” On his Buddhist-temple caper: “I remember . . . admiring the majestic burnt umber robes of the Buddhist monks and saying, ‘Hmmm. Earth tones.’” He mentioned the Gridiron Club’s 115-year-old tradition as “one I invented” and said that McCain’s “Luke Skywalker” was “loosely based on me.” He admitted that his wife Tipper had cautioned him about exaggeration, “five billion times, literally.” When he began speak-

ing, he asked for an iced tea, downed the tumbler, and said, “I can’t stay long.” This guy may be livelier than he looks.

■ Humanitarianism has not heretofore been one of Patrick Buchanan’s major considerations in foreign policy. Yet now he wants to lift the sanctions on Cuba and Iraq because of the suffering they cause. After a decade’s evolution in his thinking, Buchanan has now arrived at a position of supporting free trade with our enemies and protectionism for our friends. This is no way to keep America First.

■ Liberal Republicans often claim that they must vote the way they do because otherwise they would lose their seats to Democrats. Often this is the case. But surprisingly often, these congressmen hold safely Republican seats. The districts of Sherwood Boehlert, Jim Greenwood, John Porter, Marge Roukema, and Fred Upton are not likely to go Democratic anytime soon. In such circumstances, conservatives have every reason to mount primary challenges to the incumbents. The Club for Growth—a new, free-market PAC started by investor Richard Gilder and NR’s Dusty Rhodes—is therefore to be commended for backing a challenger to Roukema. The National Republican Campaign Committee has responded by sending more money to Roukema. But Republican donors do not send the NRCC money to fight conservatives. They want to elect Republicans—and if the Club succeeds, they might elect some real ones.

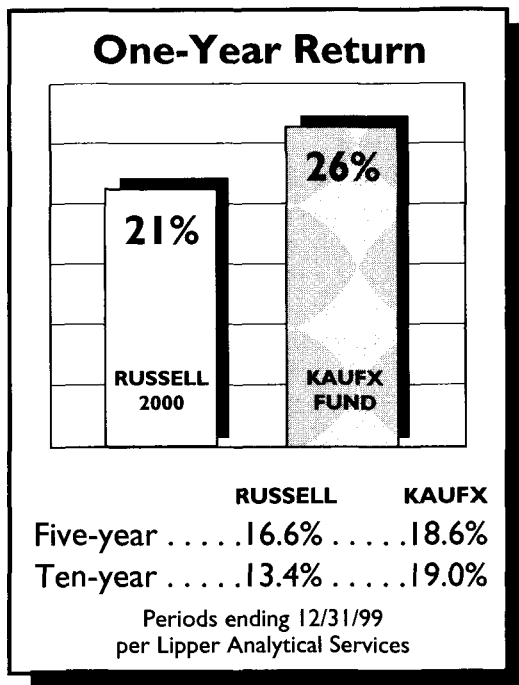
■ Patrick Dorismond, a 26-year-old security guard, was accidentally killed by New York City police in a fracas following a drug operation (Dorismond had no drugs on him). Mayor Giuliani announced that Dorismond had a history of scuffling and unsealed his juvenile record to prove it. A riot at Dorismond’s funeral injured 23 cops, and New York is on edge. The ugly flareup hurts Giuliani’s senatorial campaign, which depends on the support of free-floating liberals. More important, the situation reflects the double tragedy of Giuliani’s mayoralty. He did one impossible thing by bringing crime rates down. (The number of deaths caused by police gunfire is down, too.) If he had achieved a second impossible thing—cutting the city’s taxes and spending—there would be another topic in the conversation. If he knew when not to speak, the conversation might be less rancorous. John Adams ruefully said that George Washington had “the gift of silence.” Giuliani has it even less than Adams. New York, city and state, will now suffer as a result.

■ Dick Gephardt gave a speech attempting to present the

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Democrats as the party of the New Economy. The speech marked real progress on the Democrats' part. Gephardt announced his support for extending the ban on Internet sales taxes until 2003 and came out for a permanent ban on taxes on Internet access and transmission. But the Democrats are not reliable friends of high technology. Gephardt's speech said nothing about promoting free trade or restraining the trial lawyers. Democrats in the Senate continue to block a bill making it easier to make contracts online. Techies may favor the subsidies Democrats propose to bridge the supposed "digital divide" between rich and poor; but in time they will learn that with subsidies come regulations. Republicans can still make the case that they are better on high-tech issues—and they had better make it.

■ Speaker Denny Hastert's announcement that he was appointing a Catholic priest as House chaplain stunned his Democratic tormentors, who had hoped to keep their phony charge of anti-Catholic bigotry in the GOP alive through the election year. In an indignant speech on the House floor, Hastert refuted that "cynical and destructive" accusation and blamed Democrats for withholding their support from the Presbyterian nominee for the post, causing the minister to withdraw his name from consideration. Hastert promptly introduced Fr. Daniel Coughlin of Chicago, who was immediately sworn in as the first Catholic chaplain of the House. While rejecting the charge that GOP bias caused a Catholic candidate to be passed over for the chaplaincy last December, Hastert conceded that such animus does exist—in Hollywood, among radical gay-rights activists and feminists, and in the "arts community." These groups are contemptuous and hostile to Catholic traditions and mores, and they are members of the Democratic base. Would the Democrats rather level a false charge against their political enemies than condemn the routine insults and attacks leveled against the Catholic Church by their friends? Is the Pope Catholic?

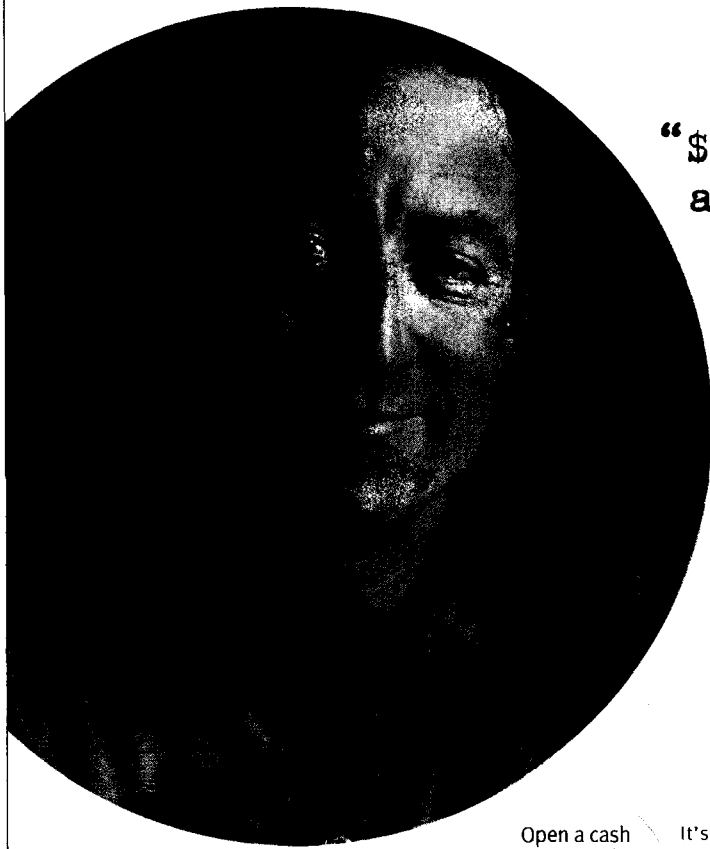
■ When the Stone Age tribespeople of Micronesia first saw planes landing and their cargoes being unloaded, they deduced that white people must have some powerful magic to lure such wondrous creatures down from the sky. They set about building mock-ups of airfields, with mud runways and control towers made of sticks and grass, in the hope of directing some of the heavenly cargo to themselves. These "cargo cults" still flourish in remote areas of Papua New Guinea. And also in the United States: for the current U.S. census is being promoted more or less frankly as a cargo cult. Federal funds are allocated to states and districts according to census returns, we are told in the covering letter that comes with our census forms. In other words: Fill out this form and *the government will give you stuff!* Never mind about that boring old self-sufficiency ethic so admired by Tocqueville ("In America the people do not wait for the nobility or the government to do something for them; they do it themselves"). Never mind about working hard to make your community prosperous, or joining civic associations to

make it safe and well educated. Just fill out the form and the cargo will come.

■ Filegate has finally been laid to rest by independent counsel Robert Ray. It had achieved a mythical status on the right as the non-sex-related scandal that would bring President Clinton to justice, if the facts were ever unearthed. Now, four years later, they have been, at least to Ray's satisfaction. FBI files are extremely sensitive—Charles Colson went to jail for mishandling one in Watergate—so it was understandable that Filegate would provoke outrage, especially given the initially conflicting administration explanations and Louis Freeh's complaint that the FBI had been "victimized." But by May 1998 Byron York could report in *The American Spectator* that there would be no Filegate indictments because the scandal did not reach above those Keystone Kop cretins Craig Livingstone and Anthony Marceca. Which perhaps provides a lesson for how to regard the latest scandal, the missing White House e-mails: If the corruption and dishonesty of the Clinton administration is never to be underestimated, neither is its incompetence.

■ The good news is that the Supreme Court decided that the FDA does not have the authority to regulate or ban tobacco. For decades, it was the settled understanding of the law, accepted by the FDA itself, that no such jurisdiction existed. Congress rejected bills to give the FDA that jurisdiction and instead enacted tobacco regulations that sidestepped the agency. The bad news, then, is that the Court made its decision by one vote. Four justices—Breyer, Ginsburg, Souter, and Stevens—were willing to grant the FDA this power even if Congress had not conferred it, essentially because it seemed really important for the FDA to have it. If their view had prevailed, the judicial and executive branches would have colluded in a major power grab from Congress. Other executive agencies, such as the FCC and OSHA, would have had even wider discretion than they have already to decide the limits of their power. The case was *much* too close a call—and with Al Gore criticizing by name the justices who voted correctly and constitutionally, it should serve as a cautionary note to anyone who thinks this year's election doesn't matter.

■ In January, Congress learned that the surplus was \$26 billion larger than expected. It took 60 days for the extra money to be spent. The just-passed House budget for 2001 runs to \$1.8 trillion. It includes \$600 billion in discretionary spending, a 4.1 percent increase over 2000. Support came almost exclusively from Republicans—the Democrats wanted even more spending. Unfortunately, Senate Appropriations chairman Ted Stevens is closer to the Democrats than to his fellow Republicans in his instincts on spending: He wants an additional \$15 billion. Meanwhile, Congress hasn't given up on spending more money for the *current* fiscal year. If Congress passes a supplement to the 2000 budget, discretionary spending will have gone up 10 percent over 1999. This extra spending is for "natural disasters and other emergencies," including



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a new FDA facility in Los Angeles, assistance for lobster fishermen, and money for NASA. The case for a tax cut—to give Congress less money to play with—has never looked stronger.

■ When a private college distributes the proceeds from student fees to liberal groups, conservatives are inclined to protest but not to go to court. Should the response change when a public university is involved? The Supreme Court unanimously said no. The Court was correct to reject the notion that the First Amendment's free-speech guarantee came into play: Nobody forces anyone to go to the University of Wisconsin. But the protesting students were right, as well: Universities should not take students' money and give it to groups that almost all lean left—or, for that matter, to professors who almost all lean left. The political tendentiousness of the academy is not a problem that the courts can solve.

■ Congress voted unanimously to let senior citizens keep working without its costing them Social Security benefits. Marginal tax rates for the elderly, in other words, are coming down. Rightly so: In a graying population, it makes no sense to discourage work among the elderly. The historical context is also worth noting. Democrats had opposed this reform for years, and Clinton actually raised taxes on seniors. The congressional action is a testament to the continuing political power of tax cuts.

■ Physicians blithely hand out potent mood-altering drugs like Ritalin, Luvox, and Prozac to children diagnosed with attention deficit disorder, formerly known as persistent naughtiness. Many of these drugs were not developed for pediatric use, and their labels do not even specify a children's dose. Now Hillary Clinton, in her capacity as public-health busybody, has embarked on a campaign to reduce the prescribing of these drugs to children. Some obvious things need to be said. 1) Everything Hillary Clinton does in her waking hours is directed toward boosting her Senate campaign. 2) Government cash awards to low-income parents with ADD-diagnosed children, which have had the full support of this administration, have surely not helped to reduce the numbers thus diagnosed. 3) The alternatives to medication are lengthy behavioral-therapy programs at home and school, unlikely to prove popular with time-starved parents and clock-watching unionized teachers. Yet having said these things, we are bound to confess, through gritted teeth, that for once we agree with Mrs. Clinton. There is a problem here, and it needs to be addressed.

■ Bilingual education often leaves kids illiterate in two languages and fluent in none. Activists in Arizona and Colorado are now working to follow California's lead by passing initiatives to ban it. We wish them well.

■ In the minds of Chinese people, the modern history of China is marked off by "incidents," each of which is remembered by the digits of the month and day on which it

occurred. The newest milestone may be "Three One Eight": the presidential election in Taiwan on March 18 this year, when, for the first time in Chinese history, a Chinese head of state was removed by popular vote. Much attention has been paid to the fact that Chen Shui-bian's victorious Democratic Progressive party contains pro-independence factions; also to the threats from the great dragon coiled on the other side of the Formosa Strait. But the people of Taiwan are entitled, as Churchill told his own countrymen on V-E Day, to a period of jubilation. The historic nature of Chen's victory can be measured by the fact that the official name of the place he is president of is still "The Republic of China," an entity that had been ruled by the Nationalist party continuously since October 10, 1928, when Chiang Kai-shek assumed the presidency in Nanking. No significant number of Chinese people has ever been ruled by any political party other than the Nationalists and the Communists—not until Three One Eight.

■ If China behaved internationally like, say, Switzerland, approving permanent normal trade relations with it would be a no-brainer. But Beijing provides weapons of mass destruction to rogue and enemy states; pursues naval and political hegemony over the South China Sea; bullies Taiwan; seeks nuclear and other American secrets that can be used only for hostile military purposes; tries to obliterate non-Han populations in Tibet and Xinjiang; and represses religious freedom for everyone from the Catholic Church to the Falun Gong. On the other hand, keeping trade barriers against China—and keeping their trade barriers against us as well—would not ameliorate any of these problems, and could make some of them worse. At least a partial answer is at hand in the form of the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act. The bill is not a complete response to the litany of Chinese threats to American interests, but it does draw a clear line on what is at present the most sensitive issue—not just for the Taiwanese, but for other nations in East Asia that are carefully observing Washington's posture here. Congress should link approval of permanent normal trade relations to the Taiwan bill. Beijing should be under no illusions that it can push around the entire American body politic as it does the Clinton administration.

■ Vladimir Putin loves to praise the KGB, his good old school. He respects its bosses and, though almost a teetotaler, toasts them in private and in public, from the Bolshevik founding fathers down to Vladimir Kryuchkov, last of the KGB's Soviet diehards, whom he still proclaims "a very decent chap" and under whom he was himself a colonel. In the immediate post-Communist era, he did useful legwork for the St. Petersburg KGB as it disbanded to grow into the biggest mob in town. Probably the dirtiest of all the dirty deals cut in today's Russia was Boris Yeltsin's appointment of this secret-police apparatchik to be his successor, in return for total immunity in the future. Strapping on a pilot's helmet, Putin looked the action-man in a shiny MiG fighter on a mission over Chechnya, as though central casting had assigned



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him to play opposite James Bond. President Clinton urges Putin, who won Russia's March 26 election, to undertake "impartial and transparent investigations of reported human-rights violations." What, another of those impartial investigations in which Russians are such specialists? Sugar daddies in the IMF, the World Bank, and the Clinton administration can hardly wait to start fawning and writing checks. Mrs. Albright thinks Putin "uses all the right vocabulary." That's a huge relief, of course. But immigration services everywhere in the West are likely to be on overtime soon.

■ The heroic age of conservatism enjoyed a brief reprise on Long Island when Hofstra University held a conference on "The Thatcher Years—The Rebirth of Liberty?" attended by leading veterans of the Thatcher and Reagan administrations and some of their critics. What emerged from the lively proceedings was that the Left's attempts to rewrite the 1980s as a decade of unproductive capitalist greed during which the Soviet Union spontaneously deconstructed are gradually failing. Even in academia, the conventional wisdom now concedes that Reagan and Thatcher won the Cold War with a combination of a military buildup and ideological resistance; that Mrs. Thatcher instituted the long-term revival of the British economy; that the success of these conservative administrations forced the parties of the Left into a new moderation. In her address, Lady Thatcher warned of the danger to liberty posed by the spread of international economic regulation imposed by unaccountable U.N. bodies. Her remedy was greater cooperation between the democratic countries of the English-speaking world on the basis of shared cultural understandings, a joint tradition of common law, and free-market economics. After eight years of Clinton's purposeless multilateralism, might these be the new directions for a Republican foreign policy?

■ In "Little Gidding," his final quartet, T. S. Eliot wrote that we go to pilgrimage sites to be "where prayer has been valid." In this spirit Pope John Paul II, bent, old, but indomitable, went to what was once called the Holy Land—because it had been hallowed by the Lord's presence. He continued the Lord's work by visiting Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial, and reflecting on the cruelties visited on the people who were the first carriers of God's message. He hoped his journey might be a means of lessening sectarian strife. Numerous Palestinian die-hards, and a few Israeli ones, rejected the opportunity. But a tireless and humble man continued in the efforts he will yet continue, until the Lord calls him home.

■ Following the Bob Jones University flap and the contretemps over the new House chaplain, our current election campaign increasingly resembles the 17th-century wars of religion. Now we have an outfit called Women Leaders Online—whose advisory committee includes Democratic representatives Nita Lowey, Louise Slaughter, and Carolyn Maloney, and former Democratic vice-presidential nominee Geraldine Ferraro—joining the international campaign to downgrade the Vatican's

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And joins him in the gym.
They promenade in lockstep, but
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On dark days when it nags about
The WTO.*

—W. H. VON DREELE



observer status at the U.N. because of the Church's hostility to abortion. One can imagine Al Gore's feelings toward these pro-choice warriors—just when he thought he had the anti-Catholic vote sewn up. If he is contemplating disciplinary action against them, we'd like to remind him that a key incident in those earlier wars was the Defenestration of Prague, and that the U.S. Capitol boasts many broad, high windows.

■ Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin, né H. Rap Brown, sometime black radical, has been arrested for shooting two Georgia cops who were trying to serve him a warrant—one of them fatally. Much comment ensued about what a surprise this was: Al-Amin/Brown is a Muslim cleric, living quietly in Atlanta, etc., etc. Come on: Every other thug and dictator likes music and dogs. That doesn't make them nice guys. In the Sixties, Brown said, "Violence is as American as cherry [sic] pie," and incited a riot in Maryland. Later he served five years for armed robbery. The warrant that sparked the murderous shooting was for impersonating a police officer while driving a stolen car. His lawyer says, absurdly, that "the system" framed him. No: A bad apple has ended up, once again, in the trash.

■ Morris Abram, who died at 81, had a career flipped by history. As a young Georgia lawyer, he stood firmly in the liberal wing of the Democratic party. He sued to overturn state primary rules that overrepresented rural counties in which blacks did not vote; he got Martin Luther King Jr. out of jail after one of his sit-in arrests. Kennedy and Johnson appointed him to this and that. But in the late Sixties, he began fighting former friends. Named president of Brandeis in 1968, he opposed a black-studies program because it would turn the school into "a university of superficialities"; worse, he sought to punish black students who took over a building. When Ronald Reagan named him to the Commission on Civil Rights, Benjamin Hooks of the NAACP said only a Klansman would be "more incompetent." The last Democratic presidential candidate Abram voted for was Jimmy Carter. Later in his life, he wrote that "liberalism for me means that" men "must be treated as equal citizens in the eyes of the law." Liberals rewrote the dictionary. R.I.P.

Legal Muggings

THE federal government and several cities reached a deal with Smith & Wesson, the gunmaker: The company will restrict the distribution of its products; the feds and the cities will drop their lawsuits against it. The deal will at best yield minimal improvements in public safety. Many of the restrictions on Smith & Wesson are superfluous, codifying standard industry practices; others make it harder to use guns for self-defense. Several provisions also impose burdens on other parties (such as gun sellers and buyers). Some of them, finally, would put Smith & Wesson's competitors at a disadvantage if generally adopted.

Similar criticisms could be made of other gun controls, such as the legislation proposed by New York's poll-mad Republican governor, George Pataki. But the method by which the Smith & Wesson deal was obtained is particularly noxious. Ever since the legal assault on the tobacco industry began to succeed, the use of lawsuits to achieve public-policy goals has become widespread. While its chief practitioners are liberals, this tactic even has some conservative support: At a recent Senate hearing, Republican Sam

Brownback lent a sympathetic ear to a woman who is suing a video-game maker for having something to do with the fatal shooting of her son.

Here's what's wrong with making laws out of lawsuits—quite apart from the infringements on property rights and freedom of contract such lawsuits often entail:

It perverts the rule of law. It is bad enough that companies are held retroactively liable for selling products that nobody considered illegal at the time of sale. The litigation campaign is also lawless in spirit: Almost nobody really believes the novel legal theories used to justify this liability. The point, as several of the litigants have made clear, is not to win courtroom victories but to harass companies financially with multiple flimsy lawsuits. Either make a deal or—as HUD secretary Andrew Cuomo has threatened the gun industry—suffer “death by a thousand cuts.” This is uncomfortably close to extortion.

It's corrupting. In these lawsuits, government officials usually deputize private parties—often prominent lawyers who have contributed to their campaigns—to represent the public against other private parties. Any government that initiates a lawsuit will have an incentive to squeeze more money from the defendants than the law requires. But the typical arrangement compounds this problem because the lawyers have an incentive not only to squeeze money from the

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defendants, but also to keep as much of it as they can for themselves and not their client governments. The government officials often make it easier for the lawyers by keeping the arrangements secret.

It's undemocratic. White House adviser Bruce Reed argues that litigation is necessary to break a "legislative stalemate." But when a legislature fails to take some action urged on it, it has decided that it opposes the recommendation or at least does not strongly support it. Either decision has as much legitimacy as the decision to act. Liberals claim that Congress has failed to regulate guns or tobacco because it is in the grip of special interests. They are mistaken: Congress has rejected sweeping regulations because millions of Americans oppose them. In any case, the Constitution does not permit the executive branch to go its own way because it suspects the legislature is incompetent or immoral.

These deals not only sidestep the legislatures; they also sidestep the courts. If a court had tried to impose the kind of restrictions on advertising that the tobacco companies "voluntarily" accepted, a First Amendment challenge would probably have succeeded. Deals keep opponents from ever having a clear opportunity to make their arguments.

The lawsuits are undemocratic in another way, too: They let a few state and local governments effectively set policies for the entire nation. If Idaho residents want to buy a certain type of gun, they should not be precluded from doing so because of a deal made between a gun company and the city of Los Angeles.

The trial lawyers are counting on the unpopularity of their immediate targets to make their campaign immune from criticism. But polls suggest that the public disapproves of the gun lawsuits by a robust margin. In the long run, Congress ought to reform the product-liability laws to deter legal harassment. In the interim, it should protect federalism and the freedom of interstate commerce by restricting the ability of states and localities to launch these lawsuits. Otherwise, it will become harder and harder to say that here, the people rule.

CUBA

Elián and His Enemies

A FEDERAL court in Miami has ruled that six-year-old Elián Gonzalez must be returned to his father in Cuba. The only alternative is a grant of political asylum by Janet Reno; but that eminent person is, Judge Moore tells us, "determined to see that a father's wishes to be reunited with his son be given primacy in law and fact." Absent from the opinion of the federal court, and from the pronouncements on the matter by the attorney general, the INS commissioner, and the president himself, has been any understanding that the wishes of Juan Miguel Gonzalez cannot be known to us while he is in Cuba. Missing, indeed, is any understanding of what life is like in a totalitarian state, where the wishes of

the individual count for nothing, and the child of an "enemy of the people" (Elián's mother committed an act of treason by attempting to flee Castro's paradise) may not enjoy even that semblance of a normal life grudgingly permitted to other citizens.

Actually it would not be difficult to determine Mr. Gonzalez's true feelings. We need only insist that he travel the 90 miles to the United States to state his case, bringing with him anyone Castro might hold hostage to his behavior. Fox News has already offered to pay his entire expenses for the trip. Parents in similar cases routinely travel halfway round the world *at their own expense* to assert their rights. Where is Mr. Gonzalez? But no one in the Clinton administration is going to insist on his appearance. These are people who, 30 years ago, decorated their college dorm rooms with posters of Che Guevara. Castro, of course, knows very well what kind of creatures he is dealing with.

Casting its shadow over the whole Gonzalez affair is the strange, hulking figure of Reno. It beggars belief to recall that our current attorney general first came to the attention of the Clintons as a champion of children. What more dire fate could befall any child than to find himself the object of her cold gaze? As a state attorney in Florida during the 1980s, Reno distinguished herself as a leader of the "child abuse" witch-hunts. At her urging, preschoolers were subjected to long sessions with interrogators like the unspeakable Drs. Joseph and Laurie Braga. With the aid of anatomically correct dolls, the tots were browbeaten and intimidated into "remembering" abuse by innocent child-minders—whose own children were then deprived of loving parents for the decade or so it took the authorities to realize that the whole thing had been a ghastly mistake.

At the siege of the Branch Davidians in Waco, Reno was told—she cannot remember by whom—that the cultists were "beating babies." To spare the little ones this abuse, she had them incinerated alive. Now Elián Gonzalez must be returned to a father whose feelings and character cannot be known to us, and to the phalanx of secret policemen who ensure that Mr. Gonzalez says and does nothing unscripted. Such is the determination of Janet Reno. Add one to the tally of kids who have suffered and died to advance the career of this latter-day Bluebeard.

CULTURE WATCH

Liberal Arts

IT was, in some ways, the peak moment of the Oscars, the one that called for George Grosz: author John Irving, sleek as an old harbor seal in his tux, accepting his award for Best Adapted Screenplay for *The Cider House Rules*, thanking Miramax for "the courage" to film his proabortion tract. CLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAP. Courage? There is not a subculture on the planet, except maybe the Bangkok sex industry, that needs abortion more

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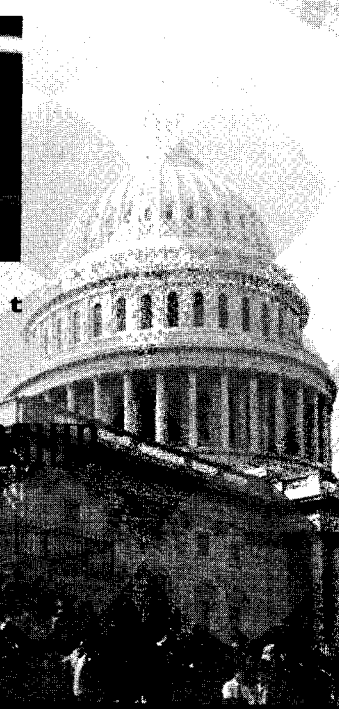


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than Hollywood. The stars and the powerbrokers could procure abortions, of course, whatever the law said, but it makes them feel good to believe that their need is idealistic.

So it went on Oscar night, a cavalcade of correct nominees and winners. *The Green Mile*—wrong (black) man executed. *The Hurricane*—wrong (black) man imprisoned. *The Insider*—wrong industry. *American Beauty*—wrong country. Best Actress, Hilary Swank, doing a John Irving about the bravery of producing *Boys Don't Cry*, a film on the murder of a cross-dressing lesbian. Try playing Mrs. Randy Weaver, Hilary, and see who buys the script.

On the rare occasions when Hollywood thinks about itself,

it declares that it is balanced. It spools out exploitative violence and (heterosexual) titillation by the furlong, but it also does serious films on serious issues—like *The Cider House Rules*. Pleasing Kate Michelman is also thought to be an adequate sop to Tipper Gore.

There is no hope of change, because the bottom line is boycottproof. American ticket sales were up this year, and the world market, in which Hollywood rampages over weak sisters like the French film industry and even Bollywood, fills the coffers yet higher. Men will often sacrifice principle for money, and occasionally money for principle. But when the two go hand in hand, why worry?

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: May I offer a footnote to your ex cathedra pronouncement about whether quotation marks should be used for titles?

From *Punctuation Plain and Simple* by Edgar C. and Jean A. Alward (Career Press):

"Titles of sets of books, individual books (of any kind), pamphlets, magazines, three-act (or more) plays, movies, operas, long poems, works of art, films, radio and television shows, and newspapers are indicated by italic type (or underlined).

"Titles found *within* a larger volume are set off with quotation marks. For example, short stories, short poems, one-act plays, term papers, chapters from books, articles, essays, songs, and speeches are enclosed in quotation marks.

"While applying these guidelines for punctuating titles, also learn this rule for capitalizing titles: Always capitalize the first letter of the first word, the first letter of the last word, and all the first letters of the other words in between, except articles, prepositions, and conjunctions of four letters or less."

Respectfully,
Kalman I. Nulman
Attorney and Counselor-at-Law
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Nulman: Many thanks. *That*, in the language of the legal profession you adorn, would appear to be dispositive.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Recently in this space you listed reasons for being in favor of registering guns with government officials.

Although your reasons were valid ones, I'm sure the policemen and politicians you referred to will first confiscate the registered guns before those same policemen and politicians engage in tyrannical behavior.

Would so many people have been slaughtered by the Soviet and Nazi regimes if the people had been armed and could have protected themselves?

Sincerely,
Terence McKeever
Wantagh, N.Y.

Dear Mr. McKeever: Dissenting Russians mobilized in 1917–18 and were overwhelmed. The Germans were not in the mood to take up arms against the new government.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Bill: You wrote in a recent column, "The dictionary reminds us that a demagogue 'obtains power by means of an impassioned appeal to the emotions and prejudices of the populace.'"

Except for the interpolation of the phrase "of the populace" and the insertion of "the" before "emotions," this definition tracks that given by the *American Heritage College Dictionary*.

I remember reading that you use this dictionary as your authority.

May I suggest two reasons that militate your use of another dictionary, the *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary*?

First: Of all the desk dictionaries that I know of, only the *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary* gives a definition of "modus ponens."

Second: The *American Heritage College Dictionary* boasts the presence on its Usage Panel of none other than that arch-hard-left-liberal radical Nina Totenberg!

What is the antecedent of your "the dictionary"? (Emphasis added.)

Sincerely,
David I. Caplan
Madison, N.J.

Dear David: [Do I know you?] Well now, I don't see that defining *modus ponens* affects one's understanding of the meaning of the word "demagogue," or did I miss something?

And yes, Ms. Totenberg is a member of the Usage Panel of the *American Heritage College Dictionary*. On the other hand, so am I.

The use of "the," as in "the dictionary," tells the reader that such is the common understanding. As in, "The consensus is that Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare's plays."

And David, it should read: "... reasons that militate *to* [or *for*, or *in favor of*] your use of another dictionary. . . ."

Cordially,

—WFB

Oh, Arianna!

The progress of a political diva

RAMESH PONNURU

ONE might expect that Arianna Huffington would be happy. As a columnist and media personality, she has spent five years telling politicians, especially Republicans, to make compassion their guiding ethic. Now the Republican presidential nominee is someone who believes as she does about the importance of government assistance to the volunteer groups, often religious, that tend to the poor. More recently, Huffington has been an enthusiast for campaign-finance reform; and that issue has dominated the presidential race as much as any issue has.

Yet Huffington is far from happy. Her new book, *How to Overthrow the Government*, is a catalogue of complaints, a prolonged howl of indignation. It is also a chronicle of how that indignation led her from being a conservative hanger-on to Newt Gingrich to being a publicist for Warren Beatty's political career. It is, more prosaically, a bunch of her columns stitched together, which often makes the book sound like a rambling monologue by Ross Perot's crazy aunt.

Huffington's verbal missiles are not precision targeted. She is hostile to the pharmaceutical industry. The media. Rich people who donate to museums and universities instead of to the poor. Politicians who follow the polls. And politicians who ignore "the will of the people" and instead pander to special interests.

She rails against negative campaigns and political consultants. She takes offense at the phoniness of fundraising letters. She calls political endorsements a "time-honored campaign con game" that "only adds to our sense that politics in America has degenerated into a world where there's no integrity, no principles, and no truth." She scorns politicians



By Roman Genn

who talk about prosperity—"The P-word," she calls it. It's materialistic, you see. Such politicians see their task as nothing more exalted than "keeping inflation low for Wall Street titans." Inflation, apparently, is good for poor people. Not that anybody cares about them under our present campaign-finance arrangements: "Money speaks louder than the muffled cries of the poor." But Huffington, for one, hears their cries—perhaps when they're serving her guests dinner.

She has been many things in her 49 years, but one thing she has always been is upwardly mobile. (She's been dubbed the Edmund Hillary of social climbers.) Born in Athens, Arianna Stassinopoulos was educated in England, where her debating skills earned her the presiden-

cy of the Cambridge Union. She first attracted the attention of a wider public at age 23, when she wrote one of the earliest antifeminist books. For several years thereafter, she made the rounds in London, attached to the prominent journalist Bernard Levin. During this period, she became a minister in the Church of the Movement of Spiritual Inner Awareness (MSIA—pronounced "messiah"). Spirituality has been a recurring subject of her writing. Her 1994 book *The Fourth Instinct: The Call of the Soul* includes a description of an out-of-body experience she had.

In the Eighties, Stassinopoulos left London for New York and then Los Angeles. She seems to have spent much of the decade at dinner parties, where her flowing red hair, exotic accent, quick wit, ingratiating charm, and famous paramours made her a star. She also found the time to write three books. They made a splash, partly because she was accused of plagiarizing large chunks of them.

When she married oil scion Michael Huffington in 1986, her wedding dress cost more than most college grads' starting salaries; the reception was a P-word affair that cost upwards of a hundred grand. It's traditional in Huffington profiles to quote Henry Kissinger: The reception, he said, had everything but "an Aztec sacrificial fire dance." Barbara Walters was a bridesmaid.

In 1992, Michael Huffington ran for Congress as a moderate Republican, knocking off the conservative incumbent through sheer force of money. He was no sooner elected than he started running for the Senate against Dianne Feinstein. Huffington spent \$30 million, still the record, but lost. (In her new book, dedicated to campaign-finance reform, the first reference to this race occurs on page 101; also the last.) It was a bruising race. The Huffingtons had terrible press: She was depicted as a power-hungry cultist, he as her puppet. They seemed unusually blessed with the sort of anonymous "friends" who would describe them as such to reporters.

She sprang back quickly, setting up a conservative salon in Washington. While Michael stayed in California, she lent glamour to the short-lived Republican revolution of 1995. She blanketed

Washington with Christmas cards featuring her little girls dolled up in creepy come-hither poses. She was a confidante of Newt Gingrich, joining others to form the Center for Effective Compassion. She even urged Gingrich to run for president as a compassionate conservative (which was an only slightly less ludicrous idea than it sounds now). But it wasn't long before Huffington, now armed with a syndicated column, turned on Gingrich. She felt deceived, she claims, when she found out that a passion for charitable tax credits was not, in fact, at the center of his being. "It was like a divorce," recalls a Gingrich ally. "Everybody had to choose up sides, and she was hostile to everyone who stayed with him." Gingrich loyalists would more than once be targets of Huffington's column.

She is not your average columnist, being smarter and more entertaining than most. She also gets more personal. House majority leader Dick Armey has an "ersatz, insipid, and duplicitous style." Bill Bennett is "intellectually dishonest." Henry Kissinger, she argues, favors a soft line on China (a position consistent with his entire career) because of his investments there. Could be she's just getting even for that crack about her wedding.

Huffington's zeal in the service of compassion is often indistinguishable from malice. A column in 1997 attacking one of Gingrich's aides slyly outed the aide as a homosexual. A year later, she wrote a column alluding to a nasty, baseless rumor about a congressman that was circulating in Washington. No other journalist would touch it. Still another column identified a woman—not one of the well-known ones—who had had an affair with President Clinton. (In her new book, by the way, Huffington decries the media's "slow-drip character assassination" and "rumor mongering.")

Her barbs at conservatives—and the controlled outrageousness of her style—won her some new fans. She started appearing on the Comedy Central network with Al Franken, the occasionally funny liberal comedian. She wrote a political satire. The Christmas cards stopped coming. The Center for Effective Compassion fell by the wayside. As did her marriage. (Michael

Huffington would later make a public announcement of his bisexuality.) Once she was divorced, she decided that her daughters should be close to their father and took her multimillion-dollar settlement back to L.A. The salon revived, this time with actors rather than congressmen in attendance.

In her most recent incarnation, Huffington is more convinced than ever that America is becoming two nations, "a moneyed elite growing rich from globalization" and a growing underclass. (Skeptics may note that most Americans live in neither nation.) Politicians, in thrall to their "Big Business corporate masters," ignore poverty. Drug policy also reflects corporate power: We continue a futile war on drugs while allowing pharmaceutical giants to dope up our children. Which, she explains in her new book, causes them to shoot their classmates.

■

**Huffington says she has moved
beyond the tired categories of
Left and Right—something
pretty much said only by liberals.**

■

Huffington's political utterances have never been temperate or subtle. In 1995 she was hellbent on revolution. A few years later, she was comparing Rush Limbaugh to David Duke, calling on Republicans to repudiate the former as they had the latter. Limbaugh's offense was criticizing a summit on volunteerism in which she was involved. As the title of her new book—"How to Overthrow the Government"—suggests, she has now gone a few steps further. Now she wants tumult for its own sake. She cheers the Seattle protesters against the World Trade Organization, for example, even though she opposes protectionism.

Nor does she care who wins the presidential election. To her, both parties are the same. But beneath the surface complacency of the public, she explains, is a deep anger at this state of affairs. At a dinner party in her Brentwood home, the idea was hatched that Warren Beatty could rouse the public by running for president. He is, after all, both angry and complacent himself. Huffington

promoted this potential candidacy in her column and on TV. Dozens of people e-mailed her asking where they could send checks to Beatty. Yes, checks to a Hollywood zillionaire.

In her book, Huffington blasts the media for taking Donald Trump seriously. What's the difference between Trump and Beatty? I ask her. "Oh, it's a big distinction. Warren Beatty has an important message about America becoming one nation. He and I would disagree about how do we go about becoming one nation again. But there's no question that this notion of America being two nations with millions of Americans being left out—not just out of the prosperity but out of the political conversation—is I think a very important message."

Huffington is certainly correct in suggesting that something is deeply wrong with our political culture. It showers its attentions on people who are clever, glib, and adept at self-promotion but have little in the way of principles or capacity for reflection. Reading her book, one can only join her in pining for what she calls "less self-involved times."

Do Huffington's recent peregrinations add up to a move to the left? She says she's moved beyond the tired categories of Left and Right, something pretty much said only by liberals and leftists. Certainly, she has no shortage of ideas for how other people should spend their time and money. She implicitly defines poverty in material terms, as liberals do. She favors gun control and finds calls for assimilation "troubling." *The Nation's* columnists are bickering over whether her dalliance with the Left is a good omen or bad. On the other hand, she continues to represent the Right on a radio show called *Left, Right, and Center* and to be paired with Franken in debates.

For her part, Huffington doesn't take such things too seriously. John Fund, a *Wall Street Journal* editorialist and sometime critic of Huffington, recalls seeing her at a dinner in Washington in February: "She walked up to me and said, 'Darling, are you upset with me?' or something like that. And I said, 'Arianna, I could only be upset with you if you ever surprised me.' She laughed and said, 'What a wonderful line.' She was quite pleased with that." **NR**

You deserve a factual look at...

Much Pressure on Israel

Will Barak be able to preserve his country's security?

Unrelenting pressure is being applied on Prime Minister Ehud Barak to make ever-more-dangerous concessions to the Palestinians. What we have seen so far is only a foretaste of what is going to be demanded from Israel in the so-called "final status negotiations." What follows are some areas in which demands will be made and pressure will be applied.

What are the facts?

Land for Peace. The whole concept is absurd. Never in the history of the world has any nation returned lands to those who have attacked it. Even so, in line with the Camp David accord, Israel has yielded the vast Sinai to Egypt. It has yielded Gaza and about 40% of the "West Bank" to the Palestinians. Over 90% of the Arab population of the territories is under the control of the Palestinian Authority. What else is expected of a country that occupies only a fraction of 1% of the lands occupied by the Arabs? And shouldn't land for peace work both ways? Shouldn't the Arabs give up some land to get peace? Or why not just simply "peace for peace?"

A Palestinian State.

Israel could not survive if Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") were in unfriendly hands. And, especially in light of the experience since the "handshake," during which time more Israelis were killed by Palestinian terrorists than in any comparable previous period, there can be little question of the enduring hostility of the Arabs. The "West Bank" mountain ridges dominate the narrow waist of Israel, in which over 70% of the Jewish population, 80% of its industrial base, and the most important military installations are located. The Palestinians would not need an army to make life in Israel impossible. Moveable Katyusha rockets would dominate the area. Israel needs to keep strategic control of the "West Bank," without which it would not be defensible.

Return of the "Refugees". Population transfers have occurred throughout history. In 1923, Greece and Turkey agreed to a resettlement of 2 million Greeks and 800,000 Turks; in 1945, the resettlement of 3 million Germans from Poland and Czechoslovakia

was arranged. Following the collapse of its North African empire, France accepted close to 1.5 million people. More than 12 million(!) Muslims and Hindus were exchanged between India and Pakistan. Israel has recognized this historical necessity. But the "Arab Nation", with its enormous wealth and vast under-populated lands, has stubbornly refused to face facts. Instead of allowing the Palestinians who left Israel in 1948 (and their descendants) to be integrated into their societies, they have, for the past fifty years, kept them in miserable "refugee camps" and

"By not yielding to pressure and by not
allowing Israel to be strategically weakened,
Mr. Barak will bring peace with
security, *shalom batuach*, to Israel and
to the entire Middle East."

have encouraged them to plot vengeance and terrorism. Return of these people to Israel, including Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") is impossible. Neither Israel nor any

Palestinian entity could absorb them. There is not enough land and not enough water. It would be as unthinkable as for those 3 million Germans to return to Poland and the Czech republic or, for that matter, for the 800,000 Jews who fled or were expelled from the Arab countries to return to their original homes.

Jerusalem. Before the end of the 1967 Six-Day War, no claims to Jerusalem being a Moslem holy city or the capital of any Arab country were asserted. But for over two thousand years, Jews have been living in Jerusalem and they have been the majority population since the 19th century. Why should they give up their capital, their holy city as far back as memory goes—or even any part of it? The Moslems have their holy cities, Mecca and Medina, and they have 22 Arab capitals. There are important Arab cities in the "West Bank", under full control of the Palestinian Authority. But Jerusalem is the eternal and indivisible capital of the Jewish State.

These are the most important issues that Ehud Barak and his government will have to confront in the final status talks. As to Jewish "settlements" in the "West Bank": Netanyahu has made clear that Jews have the right to live in any part of the land of Israel, all of the land west of the Jordan River. And why not? How is it possible that 160,000 Jews living among 1 million Arabs in the "West Bank" should be an obstacle to peace if over 1 million Arabs live within the "green line" of Israel? They don't have to fear for their lives and nobody considers them an obstacle to peace. By standing firm and resolute, by not yielding to pressure from any source, domestic or foreign, and by not allowing Israel to be strategically weakened, Mr. Barak will have earned the trust of Israel and the world and will bring peace with security, *shalom batuach*, to Israel and to the entire Middle East.

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■ THE NATION ■

Dr. Laura Non Grata

The assault on a
conservative star

JOHN DERBYSHIRE

DR. LAURA SCHLESSINGER, the nation's favorite agony aunt, is in trouble with the homosexual lobbies. Last year she agreed with Paramount Pictures to host a syndicated TV talk show along the lines of her phone-in radio program, currently the most popular in the country. This began a sequence of events that culminated recently in a march by 500 protesters on Paramount. The march was organized by GLAAD, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. In a speech outside Paramount's main gate, Joan Garry, GLAAD's executive director, demanded that Paramount drop the show. Speaking of Dr. Laura, Ms. Garry declared that "if she can't be controlled, she must be stopped."

Dr. Laura's advice to the confused and lovelorn centers on the frank statement of traditional moral truths. She has publicly deplored homosexuality, referring to it as "deviant" and a "biological error." Militant homosexuals have had her on their watch list for some time. GLAAD first met with her two years ago in the hope, according to Ms. Garry, that they might "open her eyes and broaden her understanding of the impact her words have on those who listen to her." Alas, Dr. Laura's eyes remained unopened. When it became clear that the deal with Paramount was under threat, she issued a conciliatory "clarification" of her on-air remarks. Later, however, she backed off from that self-criticism. One's impression from reading these somewhat overwrought re- and recantations is that Paramount has

Mr. Derbyshire is a contributing editor of NATIONAL REVIEW.

been leaning hard on Dr. Laura; that she desperately wants that TV show; but that she is not, anytime soon, going to start telling her listeners that gay is just as good as straight. The homosexual lobbies have therefore decided that she must be destroyed, and a major campaign against her is now under way. The gist of it is that Dr. Laura is practicing "hate speech" and that her views "encourage prejudice and discrimination."

On a recent day I sat through the whole three hours of her radio show. Yes, the lady has a sharp tongue, but I heard nothing very outrageous in her advice. The strongest impression that remained with me was of her callers. What Legions of the Lost there are out there! A psychologist friend of mine is fond of repeating the statistical truism that "half the population falls below the median." Well, here they are; and one could ask for no better illustration of the thesis that those on the left-hand side of the bell curve are much more in need of simple, clear rules of morality than are the cognitive elites who run their society. The majority of callers are not coping well with the liberties handed to them by the sexual revolution. Much of Dr. Laura's work consists of the firm statement of the obvious. Are there really 17-year-old girls who do not know that getting pregnant by a man who has no intention of marrying them is the dumbest thing they can do, short of amputating a couple of healthy limbs? Yes, there are. Are there really adult men who do not know that their responsibilities to loving wives and helpless babes are far more important than transient sexual longings? Oh, yeah, lots of *those*. Dr. Laura is performing a useful service; but what a crying shame that it needs to be performed at all!

In the matter of homosexuality, Dr. Laura's hostility is rooted in her religious beliefs—she is a practicing Jew of, one gathers, the stricter sort. In Genesis, she has pointed out in that way she has, God "didn't get Adam another guy." To a degree,

this plays into the hands of lobbies like GLAAD, one of whose fondest conceits is that a refusal to accept homosexuality is a hang-up of the Religious Right—a sort of relic of the Middle Ages, like witch-burning. Pushing this line allows them to avoid more fundamental issues, like: Does society have a vested interest in promoting some kinds of private unions and discouraging others? (And, if it does not, why has every human society that ever existed *thought* it did?)

In fact, the distaste for homosexuality is deep-rooted in human culture and can be found in societies very far removed from Judeo-Christian ethics. Pre-Christian, non-Christian, and even anti-Christian societies have placed homosexuality outside the bounds of the respectable. In Mao's China it was a capital offense: Bao Ruowang's *Prisoner of Mao* includes a grisly account of a homosexual being executed. The British—i.e. Celtic, pagan—Queen Boudicca, rallying her



By Roman Genn

troops to rise against the occupying legions in A.D. 61, told them that the Romans were "men who bathe in warm water, eat artificial dainties, drink unmixed wine, anoint themselves with myrrh, and sleep on soft couches with boys for bedfellows." We British have, most of us, overcome our aversion to warm water and soft couches, but a recent survey in Britain revealed strong public resistance to further encroachments on majority culture by homosexuals. (And in fact, Roman respectability also excluded homosexuality: Julius Caesar had a passionate attachment to a male friend when young, but his minders covered it up when he went into poli-

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Dr. Laura traffics in something that is, from the point of view of organizations like GLAAD, far worse than disapproval.
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tics.) The notion that the ancient world was a freewheeling paradise of liberated gayness until those "mean-spirited" Christians stomped on it is nonsense. Even the Ancient Greeks scorned the man who "played the woman's part." Social disapproval of homosexuality plainly has more to it than just a strict reading of Leviticus.

And Dr. Laura traffics in something that is, from the point of view of organizations like GLAAD, far worse than disapproval: She hates the sin but loves the sinner, and wants to see the sinner reformed. This leads her to advocate reparative therapy, in which homosexuals, through counseling and steady encouragement, are set back on the straight and narrow, or at least the straight. Nothing arouses the ire of homosexual militants more than the idea that sexual orientation can be turned like this. If true, it means that there is some element of choice, of personal responsibility, in being an active homosexual. This robs the militants of some of their best arguments—for example, the spurious claim that disapproval of homosexuality is just like racism, since a homosexual can no more help his or her

tendency than a black person can help being black.

You don't have to share Dr. Laura's religious convictions to find this attempt by a rich, loud, media-supported lobby to get her off the airwaves profoundly antisocial. In a civilized modern society, the majority owes to harmless "lifestyle" minorities the following things: tolerance, full civil rights, and equality *as individuals* under the law. Tolerance, however, is not the same as acceptance, much less full approval. Nor is there any civil right to live free from criticism or verbal offense. Furthermore, minorities owe something to the majority, and to other minorities: a decent respect for opinions different from their own, and some forbearance in advertising their private preferences to those who find them distasteful.

There is now no large number of people in any part of American society that wishes to persecute homosexuals or to criminalize (in many states, it would be re-criminalize) their private activities. There is, however, strong feeling against their attempts to colonize longstanding majority institutions—marriage, the military, the Boy Scouts—and remake them in a form hospitable to homosexual tastes. There is also, I think, widespread unease with the effort—of which the campaign against Dr. Laura is one element—to demonize other minorities who object to homosexuality on religious or moral grounds. Just as tolerance is not the same thing as approval, neither is disapproval the same thing as hate. A lot of people object to homosexuality for a lot of reasons, from the religious to the hygienic. Just as homosexuals ought to be tolerated by the rest of us, so those other voices should be tolerated by homosexuals.

In a free society, nobody should be denied harmless private satisfactions; but neither should anyone who honestly believes those satisfactions to be immoral be silenced. American culture has survived Ellen DeGeneres baring her soul on prime time; it will survive Dr. Laura telling us that what Ellen does is "deviant." It may not survive the sinister totalitarian doctrines of "hate crime" and "speech crime" promoted by the likes of GLAAD. **NR**

■ CAMPAIGN 2000 ■

Using a Club

A campaign against
 GOP libs & mods

KATE O'BEIRNE

REPUBLICANS may keep control of the House in November, but their victory won't translate into lower taxes and smaller government unless liberal defectors in the GOP ranks are brought into line. Weary of seeing their agenda blocked by liberal Republicans, a new political group dedicated to the cause of limited government has taken on the task of imposing discipline on the mavericks.

The 1,000-member Club for Growth hopes to put pressure on the liberals by bundling checks from the Club's members to fund conservative primary challenges against unsatisfactory incumbents. In its first election cycle, the Club has targeted one veteran congresswoman, Marge Roukema of New Jersey's fifth district; and the outcome of her primary in June could provide an early indication of whether the next Republican Congress will be more successful than the current one in reducing the size and scope of government.

The Club for Growth is modeled on EMILY's List, the feminist group that solicits donations for liberal candidates and combines the contributions for maximum effect. Founded last year by investment banker Richard Gilder and NATIONAL REVIEW president Thomas L. "Dusty" Rhodes, the Club recently delivered its first batch of checks to Republican assemblyman Scott Garrett for his challenge to Roukema. The conservative state legislator lost to Roukema in the 1998 primary by only 1,717 votes, and the Club expects that its members will provide him with \$100,000 for this year's rematch.

Why Roukema? There are, after all, Republican House members with more liberal voting records than hers, yet they

have been spared the Club's opposition. Columnist Lars-Erik Nelson expressed outrage that such a sensible centrist as Roukema would be challenged, declaring that "you can't get much closer to the middle of the American political road" than Roukema.

But in fact, the targeting of Roukema has been very carefully calculated. Some Republicans who are more liberal than Roukema have been given a pass by the Club simply because they represent more liberal districts, in which the primary defeat of a GOP incumbent would risk a Democratic takeover of the seat—an outcome the Club wants to avoid. New Jersey's fifth district, on the other hand, is so reliably Republican—Dole carried it in 1996—that it's a safe bet that either Roukema or Garrett will be its next representative. Stephen Moore, the Club's president, explains that while Maryland congresswoman Connie Morella is the most liberal Republican in the House, she doesn't fit the Club's criteria for challenges because her seat in the Maryland suburbs could so easily fall into Democratic hands. "Connie Morella casts one important vote every session, for a Republican Speaker of the House," Moore points out.

While more conservative than Morella, Roukema is more liberal than the majority of her Republican colleagues. Her opposition to Social Security privatization, medical savings accounts, and fundamental tax reform puts her at odds with the Club for Growth. She was also one of only twelve Republicans to oppose the GOP's version of HMO reform, and one of only four to oppose the House Republicans' version of the 1996 welfare reform. In 1993, she sponsored the Family and Medical Leave Act, and just last year she supported increased funding for the NEA.

Garrett, meanwhile, is a solid conservative—not only on the economic issues that are the focus of the Club, but on other issues as well. Unlike Roukema, for example, he is pro-life; and he has been endorsed in the past by the NRA.

The Club recognizes that Garrett faces an uphill battle in his rematch.

Two years ago, he caught Roukema off guard and came close to defeating her in a low-turnout off-year election. She's certainly better prepared now. Still, a recent poll shows her under 50 percent, which can spell trouble for a well-known incumbent; and the Club's financial clout behind Garrett has her worried.

Her liberal GOP colleagues have also become involved, howling in protest at the Club's heretical challenge to an incumbent. They are demanding that GOP leaders—the same ones they have made a career out of defying—ride to their rescue and pressure the Club to leave incumbents alone.

The Club has no intention of backing off, maintaining as it does the quaint belief that competitive primaries are good for the party. The Club is also backing conservative candidates in primaries for open seats and will fund some Republican challengers to Democratic incumbents; for example, the group will help Dylan Glenn, a young black conservative, in his attempt to knock off Rep. Sanford Bishop, who is in his fourth term representing a potential swing district in Georgia.

Moore thinks his members could spend up to \$4 million in support of candidates who are economic conservatives. He explains that the Club wants to elect more members like Rep. Paul Ryan, the former staffer to Jack Kemp and Bill Bennett who won an open seat in Wisconsin in 1998.

But for the moment, the challenge to Roukema is central to the Club's mission. According to Moore, "We could elect eight or ten more Paul Ryans, and that wouldn't be enough if 30 liberal Republicans still operate as free agents." He's convinced that defeating one moderate Republican would intimidate like-minded colleagues enough to be worth the same as electing ten new conservatives.

Roukema might survive this year's challenge, helped by a larger turnout and the electorate's pro-incumbent frame of mind. But she has taken to touting herself as "one of the most respected fiscal conservatives" in the House—which is evidence that even she now recognizes that the middle of the road can be a dangerous place. **NR**

■ PUBLIC POLICY ■

Preferences for (Almost) All

Affirmative action today

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

CONSERVATIVES are used to losing, but at least they refrain from celebrating their defeats—except, perhaps, those conservatives who oppose race and gender preferences. They tell us that preferences are being uprooted throughout America and being replaced, in the words of Clint Bolick of the Institute for Justice, by "a positive-sum affirmative action that expands opportunities rather than the zero-sum race-based type that merely redistributes them." Nice. But how true is it?

If we were indeed winning this battle, we could cite solid reasons for it. Preferences are legal privileges and thus incompatible with the founding American idea that all citizens should be equal before the law. Polls have consistently shown Americans to be opposed to preferences by about 2 to 1. Court decisions, which imposed preferences in the first place, have regularly found them constitutionally objectionable in recent years. And referenda in California and Washington State have overturned them at the state level.

You might suppose, then, that race and gender preferences are gradually disappearing from American life. In fact, they are expanding, in various ways. Race preferences were originally confined to the 12 percent of Americans who are black. Today, their beneficiaries include Hispanics, Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, Alaskan natives, and immigrants who belong to these "protected classes." Since immigration from Third World countries is now transforming America demographically, a whopping *one-third* of the population is currently covered by race preferences—a figure that is predicted to grow to approximately 50 percent by 2050.

And if we add in the effect of gender preferences, whose beneficiaries include white women, *two-thirds* of Americans already benefit from these legal privileges.

Such statistics fundamentally change the nature of preferences. A white man is now almost three times as likely to suffer officially imposed negative discrimination as he was 30 years ago, and a black American is about five times less likely to be the beneficiary of the white man's sacrifice. Preferences therefore become more oppressive to their "invisible victims," but also less capable of satisfying their intended beneficiaries. Facing competition for what is now a scarce resource—namely, the jobs, promotions, and college places that would go to other people if the criterion were merit—the intended beneficiaries must either quarrel among themselves over the spoils or demand a greater degree of discrimination against white men. In practice, they do both.

When 70 percent of the population gains substantially from a government

program, it is very hard to remove it. As (Enoch) Powell's Law states: "In the welfare state, not to take away is more blessed than to give." And the longer the program persists, the more its beneficiaries feel "entitled" to it, and the more they resent even a reduction in what it provides. (That is almost certainly the reason for the gradual increase in support for preferences among minority Americans.) Yet since the "tax" levied on non-Hispanic white men in the form of blocked opportunities is increasingly burdensome and still rising, opposition to it is likely to become sharper and more vocal too. Here is the material for a bitter political conflict—which, indeed, is what we see in California, Texas, Washington State, Florida, Arizona, and other states where the voters can make an end run around the parties by placing issues on the political agenda via the referendum process.

Democrats oppose all attempts to limit or overturn preferences, unambiguously and vigorously. They have to

do so because minority pressure groups, including feminists who favor preferences, are the great majority of the party activists. For that reason, blue-collar white men are highly restive and could be won over to the Republican column by a strong, principled attack on the preferences that hobble them. But the GOP is nervous of appeals to "angry white males" and instead plays its usual game of trying ineffectively to please everyone.

Hence it is now adopting the approach of removing explicitly racial and gender-based preferences but replacing them with other forms of "outreach" designed to produce the same outcomes that preferences would have done. And some conservatives, notably Clint Bolick, justify this as a beneficent form of preference "based on need, not race." Its first fruit was the law to guarantee automatic college places for the top 4 percent of graduating classes from every high school in California. This caught on, but the currency inflated. Texas ruled that the top 10 percent of

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every class should be admitted; Florida the top 20 percent; and doubtless the federal government will soon see and raise these bids.

The objections to these devices can be succinctly stated:

1. These rules are plainly designed to produce the same effect as race and gender quotas. Indeed, many of their proponents argue explicitly that this is their aim, and the success or failure of these rules is judged by whether the number of minority students exceeds or under-shoots its former level.

2. If the legal principles developed in civil-rights litigation over the years are consistently applied, the new rules may well be illegal. A practice that produces the same effect as discrimination, even if accidentally, is lawful only if it serves some overriding business purpose. If a rule was drawn up with the intention of discriminating by stealth, as these rules were, it is doubly illegal. Since race and gender quotas are being judged by the courts to be unlawful discrimination, this attempt to smuggle them in by the back door seems to be under a legal cloud. Of course, Bill Lann Lee at the Justice Department may not sue—unless he has a very non-bureaucratic sense of humor.

3. If by any chance the rules failed to replicate the effect of quotas, the likelihood is that the bureaucracy would manipulate them to get the “right” results anyway. That, after all, is what has just happened in Florida, with a program to grant college admission to students who score badly on the SAT but who have “special talents.” An attempt to “cap” this program is now under attack from Democrats as damaging to minorities. Not without reason. It emerges that two-thirds of those with special talents are minority students. But is it statistically likely that non-Hispanic whites in Florida are that unspecial?

4. The educational effects of the new rules are damaging in two ways: First, they remove from bad primary and secondary schools any incentive to improve, since their students are guaranteed places in good colleges irrespective of their own standards; second, they have compelled colleges to divert educational resources to give freshmen basic academic training. It will be some years before we know how

many such students are graduated.

5. Above all, the justifying doctrine of the rules—need, not race—has the potential to be an engine of general bureaucratic control of the American economy. Race and gender are at least reasonably objective criteria for preferential intervention; need is an entirely relative concept, capable of infinite interpretation and invention. To give the courts, state governments, and federal agencies the power to intervene in academia and the economy to ensure that those who are needy by some bureaucratic formula are preferred in hiring and promotion over the less needy would be to abolish the free market entirely and replace it with a command economy.

After a few years of quotas for the needy, even Ward Connerly might be calling for the return of race and gender preferences. **NR**

■ PUBLIC POLICY II ■

Running Strong

Energy facts and figments

PETER HUBER

ALMOST every poll shows Americans decisively rejecting higher taxes on fossil fuels, even though that proposal is one of the logical first steps in changing our policies in a manner consistent with a more responsible approach to the environment.” The American people “signal agreement in principle while reserving the right to object strenuously to each and every specific sacrifice necessary to follow through.” But only because they “are waiting for leadership . . . They are hungry to hear hard truths and are nearly ready to make the all-out effort necessary for an effective response.”

Perhaps they are ready now. After all, it has been eight years since Al Gore published those thoughts in his 1992 book, *Earth in the Balance*, and almost as long since the Clinton-Gore administration took responsibility for provid-

ing leadership on these matters. True, the administration was thwarted in its attempt to enact a BTU tax in 1993, but OPEC’s latest antics have pushed up oil prices quite as effectively. Drivers will certainly notice if gas tops \$2 a gallon this summer. And they will undoubtedly be reminded, by Republicans if not by Gore himself, that the vice president sees expensive gas as the “logical first step” in coming to grips with oil’s impact on the environment.

But whatever the price, they’ll keep driving. The first law of our energy economy is that over the long term, demand only rises, it never falls. Fluorescent light bulbs, more efficient refrigerators, or higher-mileage car engines haven’t repealed that law in the last 20 years, and they won’t in the next 20 either. The light above the desk may use less electricity than it used to, but the desk has acquired a brand new PC that uses more. The more efficient we get in old ways of using energy, the faster we invent new ones.

Yes, the rate of growth in demand drops steadily—but mainly because the denominator grows so relentlessly. Gain a steady ten pounds a year and your “rate of growth” will decline too. Our “energy consumption per unit of GDP” drops steadily as well—but only because a growing share of our wealth goes into energy-lite things like Windows or Viagra, not because we’re using less to heat our McMansions or to propel our SUVs. In personal “energy-per-GDP” terms, Bill Gates is more energy frugal than a farmer in Bangladesh, but so what?

Oil itself, by contrast, is steadily declining in importance in the overall energy picture. Demand keeps rising here too, but oil is used mainly for transportation, which constitutes only 10 percent of the economy. As energy analyst Mark Mills has pointed out, more than 80 percent of the growth in U.S. energy demand since 1990 has

Mr. Huber is the author of *Hard Green: Saving the Environment from the Environmentalists*, a coeditor of *The Digital Power Report*, and a senior fellow of the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research.

been met by electricity, which is the primary fuel of the information economy. The fuels we use to generate electricity itself are coal (52 percent), nuclear (19 percent), gas (15 percent), and hydroelectric (10 percent), and all are plentiful. The average retail price of a kilowatt-hour has dropped 10 percent since 1990, and with recent deregulation, wholesale prices are now in free fall.

Even with oil, the more we pump, the cheaper it gets to pump it, because technology keeps pushing down the long-run supply curve. Oil companies drill much deeper than they used to, and they've learned to drill horizontally as well as vertically. A slew of improvements in sensing technology and computer imaging have sharply cut the number of dry holes. And the genetically engineered micro-organisms already used to clean up spills will eventually

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The first law of our energy economy is that over the long term, demand only rises, it never falls.

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free up the planet's vast reserves of heavy oils and tar sands that are too viscous to pump today.

Long forgotten now are the timorous 1970s, when the federal government launched a massively misguided synfuels boondoggle (to convert coal to oil) and funded schemes to burn garbage, peanut shells, and chicken droppings. Gore's book makes no mention of the "energy crisis." There never was a supply-side energy crisis, of course, just a lot of political meddling, both here and abroad, that jerked around prices for a while. Jimmy Carter worried about how to heat our humble hearths. Al Gore worries about how not to heat the whole planet.

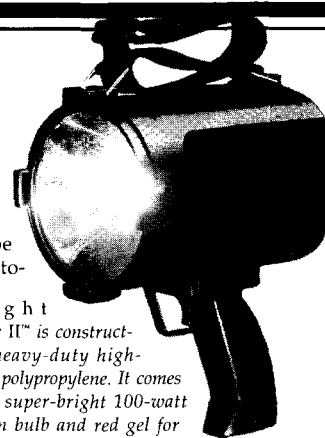
Are we about to? This much is clear: The 20th century witnessed a fundamental shift in the energy economy of the developed nations. Fuels grown on the surface gave way to fuels extracted from beneath it. Horses and pastures gave way to cars and pumps. For Gore, that transformation evokes the "the-

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atrical legend that haunted the birth of the scientific revolution: Doctor Faustus." In our vain attempt "to escape the Malthusian dilemma" we have simply struck "dangerous bargains with the future." The "cumulative impact [of car engines] on the global environment is posing a mortal threat to the security of every nation that is more deadly than that of any military enemy we are ever likely to confront." What America needs is a "Strategic Environment Initiative," "a coordinated global program to accomplish the strategic goal of completely eliminating the internal combustion engine over, say, a twenty-five-year period."

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**The environmental
consequences of our shift
from a carbohydrate to a
fossil-fuel energy economy
have been positive.**

■

But in fact, the environmental consequences of our shift from a carbohydrate to a fossil-fuel energy economy have been overwhelmingly positive. Most of our footprint on the wilderness of this continent comes from our agriculture. For every acre of land we use for home or office, roads and byways, we currently use six acres for crops. Another eight acres are designated as range—ladders for our livestock, which, pound for pound, outweighs us. By shrinking the footprint of agriculture, the shift from surface to subsurface fuels has made possible a remarkable environmental renaissance on the North American continent.

When Europeans first arrived, the area now represented by the lower-48 United States had about 950 million acres of forest. This portion shrank steadily until about 1920, to a low of 600 million acres, as rising population and economic growth impelled Americans to spread across the landscape. In 1910, over one-quarter of all U.S. farmland was used to feed horses, the "natural" and "organic" transportation system of that era—twice as much land

as is occupied today by all our roads and highways, oil pipelines, refineries, and wells. Then the wilderness area began to expand once again, and we began to retreat. Fossil and nuclear fuels have since displaced wood in our residential and industrial furnaces. We traded farm acres for trains, trucks, tracks, highways, internal-combustion engines, and fossil fuels. An advanced transportation infrastructure allowed us to trade inferior acres of farmland in the Adirondacks for much better acres in Iowa. High-tech agriculture did the rest. We now farm some 80 million fewer acres than we did 60 years ago.

Freeing up that much land to be reclaimed by wilderness has done much to clean the air and water, and protect wildlife, too. Nature has enormous power to cleanse and restore; 80 million acres reclaimed by watershed and forest has surely done more to clean water and protect birds than the curtailing of pesticides ever achieved. The best estimates at hand likewise indicate that forest regrowth in America currently recaptures all the carbon and then some that America releases into the air in burning fossil fuels.

Finally, the transformation of our energy economy has clearly created an enormous amount of wealth. And that, in turn, has had a very profound effect on another trend—the most important trend of all, it is often said, the one that propels all other trends toward environmental apocalypse. Abundant supplies of food and energy have turned out to be the most effective (not to mention moral) way to limit population. The U.S. fertility rate has dropped from eight children per woman two centuries ago to two children today. The greedier we have grown with energy, the more frugal we have become with children.

Green, it appears, is what people become when they feel personally secure, when their own appetites have been satisfied, when they do not fear for the future, or for their own survival, or their children's. Plentiful food, abundant energy, and wealth itself—not synfuels or combustible chicken droppings—have given ordinary American families the confidence, the means, and the incentive to be generous to the world beyond.

■ **CULTURE WATCH I** ■

Forever Monica

The ex-intern and her nation

PIA NORDLINGER

Manhattan

MONICA LEWINSKY'S post-scandal career couldn't be brighter. The president's former plaything has an adoring public, and they have turned out en masse on a mid-March day to catch a glimpse of her as she hawks her new line of handbags at Henri Bendel, a high-end clothing store on Fifth Avenue.

Though the crowd is generally more interested in the woman than in her product, they aren't going away empty-handed. Because they followed her story so closely, they feel a connection to her, want her to know that they're rooting for her. Forget the reason for her fame (or infamy). What matters to her admirers is that she's the jilted one. The victim. And for all her suffering, her fans offer support—words of encouragement and, perhaps more important, purchases of her fabric tote bags and purses, priced between \$138 and \$198. These bags are far from sleek and sexy; rather, they are cute and cuddly, like security blankets. Monica says she thought of them during her long hours of knitting, as she waited for the impeachment drama to end. It shows.

Here at Bendel, the former intern stands behind a counter for two hours—flanked by a publicist, hunky security guards, and piles of handbags—and plays fashion designer, sharing her creative vision with the shoppers. The security team allows quivering customers to approach the counter one or two at a time, to ogle the merchandise and meet the star. As a very poised Monica greets her public and makes small talk ("Great glasses!" "I love those

Mrs. Nordlinger is a member of the editorial board of the *New York Post*.

beads!"), photos from an array of publications snap away. Monica gives a standard sales pitch and seems genuinely pleased when customers select a bag they fancy. Well-wishers, autograph-seekers, creepy stalker-types—all are politely managed. Following strict rules, Monica will sign only the tag that accompanies a purchased bag or a copy of her book, *Monica's Story*.

For the throng, arriving at the counter is no small feat. The line is long and, because Monica lavishes attention on each person presented to her, rather slow-moving. But that doesn't squelch enthusiasm. "I admire her for not disappearing with her head in the sand," says Michele, a 31-year-old designer from Manhattan. "It's Linda Tripp who should." Two young women from a soon-to-be-launched Internet site for (what else?) twentysomethings have shown up in hopes of getting Monica involved with their site. In excited, rapid-fire sentences, they try to explain what is so special about Monica: "She has a lot to say to people of our generation." "She's starting her own business." "Women, especially, can relate to her." (Attention, male readers: This is a weight thing. You wouldn't understand.) Asked about Monica's notorious past—the very reason for her fame—one half of the Internet pair pipes up defensively: "That's not what's interesting about her." Says the other: "I don't think that any 21-year-old would have passed up that opportunity."

Another couple of ladies are equally nonchalant about Monica's fame-making exploits. They place themselves squarely in the "poor thing" camp and are hoping for an autograph. "She's been through a lot," says one of them, Patricia, who is on her lunch break. "They did treat her badly. It's been said before, but it can't be said enough: Friends don't treat friends that way [as Linda treated Monica]." One man—a proud 30-year reader of *NATIONAL REVIEW*—feels sorry for Monica because her "sex life" was made so public. He is considering the purchase of a bag: "I might buy one for my wife. She saw Hillary yesterday [at a campaign stop]. Maybe I'll one-up her!"

Among the enthusiasts are a few regular Bendel shoppers—perfectly coiffed



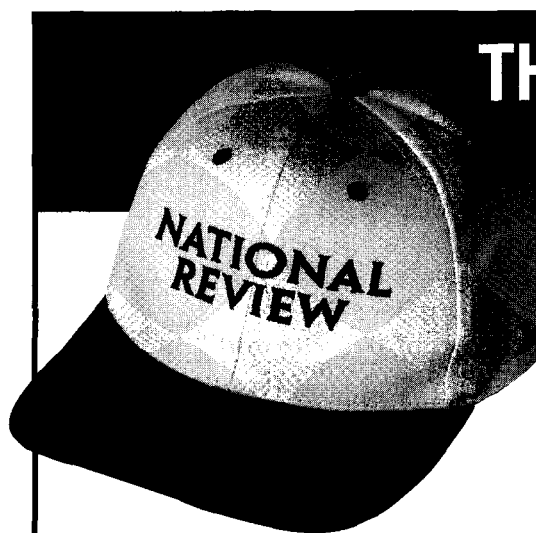
By Roman Genn

and coordinated—who have wandered up to the fourth floor to check out the commotion. One woman, Carolyn, has

her son in tow. He is twelve years old and bored out of his skull. "I applaud Monica," says Carolyn. Even though she is famous for servicing a married chief executive? "That's our culture. That's our country. You don't have to do something good for mankind to be a celebrity." Well, how about the example that Bill Clinton has set for her twelve-year-old son, standing right here? "He's very aware." More so, she continues, than her eight-year-old son, who doesn't really understand the whole thing but "knows certain phrases, like, 'I did not have sexual relations with that woman.'" And here she giggles—it's all so cute.

For the tourists in attendance, the Monica event is a *perfect* souvenir and celebrity moment. "We're from Missouri," announces one beaming woman, pleased to see the former intern after her plans to see Regis and Kathie Lee fell through. Says a stylish woman from L.A., "I just want to see her. I'm curious."

And for these curious ladies and gents, it is true, Monica is putting on a



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very good show. Her image—hair, make-up, clothes—is all very Bendel-approved and au courant. She wears a hot pink, faux-snakeskin halter top (an entire rack of which is nicely positioned near the front of the store) covered by a knee-length jacket that is slimming. (The Jenny Craig magic, sadly, has not made quite everything disappear. Waifs have no need of bulky knee-length jackets.) And all of Monica's customer-schmoozing has paid off: She has drawn 500 people and sold 200 handbags.

Money aside, though, the event has added luster to the Brand That Is Monica—a brand, furthermore, that is likely to be around for a while. Monica will probably be able to work this dubious emotional connection for years. She can sell anything now. Monica Lewinsky: the new Florence Henderson—without, of course, the talent. **NR**

■ CULTURE WATCH II ■

Diana in Death

A fairy tale of another kind

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

Poor Lady Diana Spencer. Hers was truly a bewildering fate. Born into one of Britain's most ancient and aristocratic families, she seemed destined through marrying Prince Charles to be a beautiful and fitting Queen of England. The whole world instead became privy to the infidelities of this royal marriage and the gossip surrounding its messy breakup. A drunken chauffeur in Paris then had an accident at high speed, killing himself and his passengers, Lady Diana and Dodi Fayed, the man with whom she had been having some sort of romance that summer.

Mass emotion is always mysterious. One of its essential features, though, is the conversion of hard facts into wish fulfillment. A much troubled and vulnerable personality, Lady Diana had been anorexic and on occasion had done herself physical injury. Mixing

charm and manipulation, she had leaked to the media all manner of private stories harmful to herself and the royal family. Whether or not she realized it, she was establishing herself with maximum publicity as a woman wronged. World literature testifies to the lasting power of that image.

Following her untimely death, she was quasi-canonized in the wildest travesty of reality as the People's Princess and Saint Diana. Immense crowds gathered in London, milling about in search of a purpose. Revolutions begin that way, as a number of commentators observed at the time. The government panicked. A grimacing and lachrymose Tony Blair as prime minister took the lead in expressing the sudden outburst of national hysteria and compelled the royal family into gestures of self-abasement. But the bogus religiosity out on the streets in fact had no political content.

And there the matter might have rested, except for Mohamed Fayed, father of the unfortunate Dodi. From the moment that the car accident in Paris occurred, he began claiming to know details such as Lady Diana's last words and wishes. These have all been shown to be fabrications. His motives remain obscure, but the chauffeur and the security guards involved were on his payroll, and he may have been seeking to avoid responsibility. Soon Fayed went much further. "I believe in my heart 99.9 percent that it was not an accident. There was a conspiracy." Lady Diana and Dodi, he likes to claim, were murdered by the British secret services, upon instructions from the royal family. And the royal motive? Diana and Dodi were engaged to be married, and the royal family could not accept that Prince William, the future king, might have an Egyptian half-brother—a hypothesis that Fayed puts in crude and racist language all his own.

Fayed never ceases to astonish. Egyptian by birth, he has risen from very humble circumstances, owing much to his first marriage to the sister of Adnan Khashoggi, once a prominent arms dealer and commission agent in the Arab world. Fayed's own adventures range from Haiti to Dubai, and it is far from clear how much money he had really made by the time he arrived

in Britain. At the end of a long struggle with another dubious tycoon by the name of Tiny Rowland, Fayed won control of Harrods, London's famous store. A government report then queried Fayed's finances and condemned his conduct. Fayed believed that this report too was the result of a conspiracy, this time inspired by Mrs. Thatcher, to ruin him. "I piss on the British," Fayed commented in his customary style. "I bought Harrods so I can sit up here and piss on them as they pass down there." Almost by way of a sideline, he has specialized in bribing and corrupting politicians for various ends of his own, entrapping or exposing them in the process, to leave a stain of sleaze on the country's public life.

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It is now axiomatic in the Arab world that the British royal family had Dodi killed for racist reasons.
■

In an unauthorized biography, Tom Bower, one of the most persistent of British investigative journalists, recently laid out the ascertainable facts about Fayed, and especially his instantaneous mood swings between love and hate. The CIA, it appears, had early reached the judgment that Fayed was "friendly and evil at the same time." Concurring, Bower further views Fayed as insecure, a fantasist badly in need of recognition but unable to distinguish friends from enemies, and therefore set on a path of "impetuous self-destruction." Correctly enough, Arabs everywhere see themselves as victims of some absolute ruler's "hidden hand." Even in democratic Britain, Fayed is no exception. His mind is filled with "infantile conspiracies."

And poor Dodi: There was not much to him. Terrified of his overwhelming father, he drifted on the allowance he was given, a would-be jet-setter and womanizer, a cocaine user, dabbling in film projects which mostly came to nothing. In the summer of the accident, he was apparently engaged to a model in California and first met Lady Diana on the Fayed yacht in the south of France. Lady Diana's instinct of self-

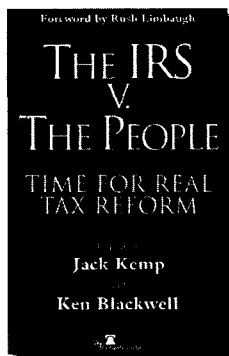
preservation was certainly weak, but any sustained relationship with Dodi would have meant rebellion and calamity. For Mohamed Fayed, though, the capture of the mother of the future King of England as his daughter-in-law would have provided revenge on the British greater than anything he could achieve from the roof of Harrods.

Also traveling in the fatal car that night was Trevor Rees-Jones, a young security guard. In spite of horrific injuries, he survived the crash. His ghosted autobiography has just been published with the title *The Bodyguard's Story*. It reveals that romance had been in short supply on the yacht. The pair had spent much of their time escaping paparazzi. They grew bored with each other. Out of the humdrum facts, though, the elder Fayed and his henchmen and a whole herd of gullible reporters together spun fantasies of a vast diamond engagement ring, a supposed pregnancy, and future married life in Paris in the house once owned by the Duke of Windsor. As Rees-Jones recovered, Fayed began to pressure him to support these fantasies, and in particular to provide the missing evidence that the accident was the result of a conspiracy carried out by the British secret services. Rees-Jones could not oblige, even in the face of what he describes as Fayed's "frightening power" and "obsessive nature." It is an ugly business. The cause of the crash was exactly as the French investigation stated. The driver was three times over the accepted limits for alcohol, with traces of two other drugs in his blood as well. The wonder is that the crowds are not now boycotting Harrods and hurling stones through Fayed's windows, to have him deported back to Egypt.

The damage is done. It is now axiomatic in the Arab world that the British royal family had Dodi killed for racist reasons. Credulous people elsewhere nod their heads in agreement. The deaths of Lady Diana and Dodi transform into a myth for all time, like the story of Mary Queen of Scots, say, or the assassination of President Kennedy. For reasons which go to the heart of literature and art, people prefer myth to reality, and the testimony of a humble bodyguard can do nothing to stop that.

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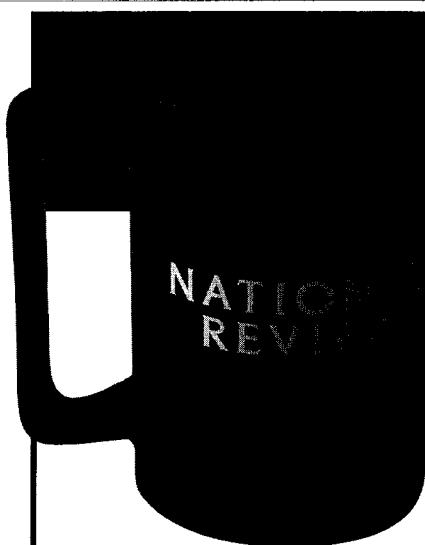
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In Defense of Brother Heat

A friend, indeed

DAVE SHIFLETT

LET us now speak highly of guns. This is a major provocation, to be sure, just as speaking well of wine was once a certain invitation to a rhetorical scuffle, and perhaps a visit from a platoon of prune-sucking matrons who needed a stiff drink almost as much as they needed a tumble in the hayloft—with spurs.

Yet it must be done, for the simple reason that a huge number of Americans do not know the glory of guns. Instead, they are petrified of them, and their fears leave them susceptible to bogus arguments, such as the assertion that there are a quarter-billion guns in private ownership due to a misreading of the Constitution, or that guns exist only to kill people. Were the latter true, of course, most of us would have been shot dead long ago, but the larger point is that these sentiments may eventually succeed in sending the gun to the gallows. Hysteria has convicted more than one innocent party, and there's a growing mob baying for the head of Brother Heat.

Before illuminating the glories of the gun—whose other names include Peacemaker, Counselor, Widow's Advocate, Equalizer, Mother's Protector, possum-plinker, and piece—a defender is required to say that it is very bad when a criminal leaves a loaded pistol in a crackhouse that is later used to shoot a schoolchild, as recently occurred in Michigan. Similarly, when glory-seeking nihilists exterminate their classmates, as two did in my old neighborhood of Littleton, Colorado, agony is our only companion—save for one. No matter how odd the circumstances, or how malicious and premeditating the perpetrators, it is said that guns are to blame and we ought to get rid of them.

Mr. Shiflett is a widely published journalist living near Richmond, Va.

As befitting this subject, a sermon appears near the end. But this is a romance, and it began long ago.

My family is from gun stock, and as a result I've owned guns since I was quite small, which is the case with many of my friends. Perhaps that's because we grew up in the South, where guns were more commonplace than umbrellas, and where there were many more rifles than marlins hanging above fireplaces. This reflected the spirit of the region, which maintained a high respect for self-sufficiency and individual freedom, and also recognized one could not drive off an intruder with a dead fish.

Our homes were very much like miniature states. The agriculture sector was found in the pantry, icebox, and perhaps a garden; the education sector in the bookshelves; the population sector in the marriage bed; and the religious sector in the Bible. As for the defense sector, it was scattered all over the house. A father's closet was likely to contain several shotguns—ours had four or five, including the set of

Browning semi-autos in 12, 16, and 20 gauges owned by Dad, my older brother, and myself. In a nightstand by my father's bed was a .45-caliber semi-auto. I would like to think my mother packed a derringer, but that is probably wishful thinking.

We did not outsource our self-defense. We knew nothing of the argument, popular today, that the danger of having guns around outweighs the chances of being set upon in the night. Our guiding principle was that relying on others for your family's defense was a basic abdication of responsibility—one more way of going on the dole. Plus, it was plain stupid. Police cannot be held responsible for arriving long after your throat has been slit. They will tell you that if you are dumb enough to have to ask. From our perspective, the person who hands over such a central aspect of existence has



something of the serf's mentality, which used to be much more of an insult than it is today.

When I went off to college, I took the 20-gauge with me. A true fowling piece, this featherweight was perfect for shooting quail, which is not the same as saying it filled the game bag. Back then, we knew that guns don't kill quail. It really took a good aim to pull that off. Such commonsense observations are now considered heretical. In any case, my gun had plenty of company, as several classmates had brought their own pieces along, including a roommate with a .22-caliber pistol. Boys being boys, and it sometimes being rainy outside, we set about devising a way to improve our small-arms talents close to home.

Let me state without reservation that there are few fellowship opportunities to match that of a dormitory-room firing range. It is also my impression that such opportunities probably no longer exist. For historical purposes, our backstop was a set of dresser drawers, placed across from a sofa on which the shooters sat, often cheek by jowl, chatting amiably while reloading and, at reasonable hours not often falling before noon, sipping beer. In modern terms, this somewhat unique and slightly taboo activity bonded its participants, and there was very little danger involved. Range rules allowed only .22 shorts, which came to rest in the bureau's drawers or within its back panel, and which in any case were incapable of penetrating the skull of anyone present.

Unfortunately, the college dean, who was an alarmist ahead of his time, shut us down after a fellow marksman was observed (by the dean) plinking a shrill robin from a bathroom window. A similar offense today, it seems safe to say, would at the very least result in ouster—without refund. Those were very carefree days.

It is probably impossible for a person who irrationally fears guns to have any appreciation for indoor collegiate shooting, or for outdoor shooting either. The mere presence of a gun fills them with the sense there's evil about, which they in turn denounce with a passion every bit as strong as Wayne LaPierre's gun advocacy, which, truth be told, is sometimes delivered with dreadful clumsiness (Wayne: The author also ghosts speeches—\$1.25 per word, all sales final). When there are children involved—and I am not speaking of criminal activity—the response is doubly damning. This is a great departure from the old days, when it was generally assumed that the children should be educated in the use of guns. These days, teaching a kid to shoot is considered, in some quarters, at least as bad as teaching him to smoke.

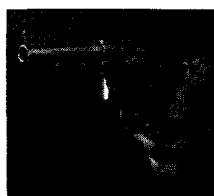
This fact was made very clear a few years back when a friend and I took our sons for some Sunday-afternoon shooting in the Pike National Forest outside Denver. On this particular day, we were equipped with an array of shotguns, carbines, pistols, and even a Chinese SKS "assault" rifle, soon to be made famous when wielded by one of President Clinton's would-be assassins on the sidewalk outside the White House. Kent had just raised the SKS to his four-year-old son's arm when—God is my witness—a Volvo sedan appeared on a nearby dirt road.

As the youngster pulled off a few rounds, my attention shifted to the approaching vehicle, inside of which was a

family of wide eyes and a pointing finger or two. No doubt there were lessons being taught about the "real" meaning of the Second Amendment, with a few denunciations of talk radio thrown in for good measure.

Two can play this game, of course, and as we banged away our boys were duly instructed that, contrary to what they might hear from people who lived in Boulder campus housing or Aspen ski chalets, the Founders would not only consider semi-autos like the SKS constitutionally protected, but would have greatly cherished having a few around during their fight with the Brits. We also pointed out that the Founders would probably be unanimous in their belief that it is Amendment 1, not Amendment 2, that is being roundly abused these days.

It should further be noted that there is no better way to teach a child that he is trusted than to present him with his own gun. A trusted child enjoys heightened self-esteem, and so the gift of a .44-caliber black-powder revolver made my youngest son's tenth birthday a happy day indeed. As did the presence of a .50-caliber black-powder rifle beneath last year's Christmas tree. While Volvo parents might try to make the same point by giving their child a penknife (if they're feeling exceptionally daring), presenting the tot with a musket that belches fire and smoke and is capable of sidelining a mid-'70s Monte Carlo is another thing altogether.



Blaming guns for our 'social holocaust' is as shortsighted as blaming the gas chambers for the real Holocaust.

Like all romances, this one is bittersweet. I once shot myself (accidentally), and while the wound was slight, a few inches northeast and I would have been left with the mental qualifications to join the Spice Girls. So beware, lads—death stalks us at every turn. More bitter still is the suspicion that the future does not bode well for gun ownership. A growing number of Americans are clearly willing to trade freedom for the hope of greater security. They may get their way.

Gun owners can argue—rightly, I believe—that blaming guns for our "social holocaust" (as one commentator terms gun deaths) is every bit as shortsighted as blaming the gas chambers for the real Holocaust. This mistaken view represents a reversal of the master/servant role, a confusion of the inanimate with the animate. We can further argue that blaming guns for horrors such as Columbine reflects a steadfast refusal to admit that our generation may have done for child-rearing what Josef Stalin did for Soviet agriculture.

All of this can be argued. But it seems reasonable to assume that it will take only a small number of glory-seeking nihilists formed, among other things, by the fullest exercise of Amendment 1 to deal a severe, if not mortal, wound to Amendment 2. If Brother Heat does take the rap, we will soon enough see what is meant by the old notion that our freedoms are indivisible.

NR

An Army of Gun Lies

How the other side plays

DAVE KOPEL

ANTIGUN advocates have always faced an uphill battle in this country. Americans have, to begin with, a constitutional right to gun ownership. Today, half of American households exercise this right, owning a total of about 250 million guns; and over 99 percent of those households do so in a responsible manner. To fight for major restrictions on an item that plays such a valued part in the lives of so many people looks like a nearly impossible task. So if you're really committed to the effort, and you want to win, what do you do?

Simple: You lie.

A full listing of the lies told by the antigun lobby could fill a book. A short list of the more popular ones would have to begin with the canard about the number of children killed by firearms. We are told repeatedly that 13, or 15, or 17 children every day are killed by guns. This factoid is used to conjure up pictures of dozens of little kids dying in gun accidents every week.

In truth, the number of fatal gun accidents is at its lowest level since 1903, when statistics started being kept. That's right: Not only is the per capita accident rate at a record low, so is the actual number of accidents—even though the number of people and the number of guns are both much larger than in 1903.

The assertions about "X children per day" are based on counting older teenagers, or even people in their early twenties, as "children." The claims are true only if you count a 19-year-old drug dealer who is shot by a competitor, or an 18-year-old armed robber who is shot by a policeman, as "a child killed by a gun." As for actual children (14 years and under), the daily death rate is 2.6. For children ten and under, it's 0.4 per day—far lower than the number of children who are killed by automobiles, drowning, or many other causes.

If the statistic about child gun deaths is the most notorious lie, one of the most frequent has to do with gun shows. All of the antigun groups repeat, incessantly, the phrase "gun-show loophole." As a result, much of the public believes that gun shows are special zones exempt from ordinary gun laws. Handgun Control, Inc., the major antigun group, has an affiliate in Colorado that claims that the "vast majority" of guns used in crimes come from gun shows, while the Violence Policy Center calls gun shows "Tupperware parties for criminals."

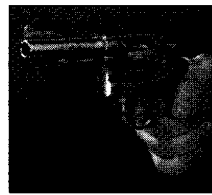
This is all an audacious lie. First of all, the laws at gun shows are exactly the same as they are everywhere else. If

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a person is "engaged in the business" (as the law puts it) of selling firearms, then he must fill out a government registration form on every buyer, and get FBI permission (through the National Instant Check System) for every sale—regardless of whether the sale takes place at his gun store, at an office in his home, or at a gun show. Those who are not gun dealers by profession, but happen to be selling a gun, are not required to follow this procedure. To imply that gun dealers can go to an event called a "gun show" and thus avoid the law is absolutely false.

Also false is the charge about Tupperware parties for criminals. According to a National Institute of Justice study released in December 1997, only 2 percent of guns used in crimes come from gun shows.

The gun-show charge has great currency in the media, but it is not very important in itself. How about the more serious charge that guns are basically dangerous to society? Public-health experts and gun-control lobbyists will tell you that most murders, including those involving guns, take place among acquaintances and are perpetrated by ordinary people; these facts supposedly indicate that ordinary people are too hot-tempered to be allowed to have guns.



If you're really committed to the antigun effort, and you want to win, what do you do?

Simple: You lie.

The facts tell a different story: 75 percent of murderers have adult criminal records. As for the rest, a large number either have criminal convictions as juveniles or are still teenagers when they commit the murder; laws dealing with access to juvenile-crime records prevent full access to their rap sheets. Furthermore, the category of "acquaintance" murders is misleading. It includes drug buyers who kill a drug dealer to steal his stash, and thugs who assault each other in barroom brawls.

There's also a sad irony here. Domestic murders are almost always preceded by many incidents of violent abuse. If a domestic-violence victim flees the home, and her ex-husband tracks her down and tries to rape her, and she shoots him, the killing will be labeled a "tragic domestic homicide that was caused by a gun," rather than what it legally is: justifiable use of deadly force against a felon.

The famous factoid that a gun in the home is 43 times more likely to kill a family member than to kill a criminal is predicated on a similar misclassification. Of the 43 deaths, 37 are suicides; and while there are obviously many ways in which a person can commit suicide, only a gun allows a small woman a realistic opportunity to defend herself at a distance from a large male predator.

Emory University medical professor Arthur Kellermann is a one-man factory of this type of misleading data. One of his most famous studies purported to show that owning a gun is associated with a 2.7 times greater risk of being mur-

dered. Kellermann compared murder victims in several cities with sociologically similar people a few blocks away in those cities, who had not been murdered.

The 2.7 factoid was trumpeted all over the country; but the study is patently illogical. First of all, Kellermann's own data show that owning a security system, or renting a home rather than owning it, are also associated with equally large increased risks of death. Yet newspapers did not start running dire stories warning people to rip out their burglar alarms or to start lobbying their condo association to dissolve. The 2.7 factoid also overlooks the obvious fact that one reason people choose to own guns, or to install burglar alarms, is that they are already at higher risk of being victimized by crime. As Yale law professor John Lott points out, Kellermann's methodology is like comparing 100 people who went to a hospital in a given year with 100 similar people who did not, finding that more of the hospital patients died, and then announcing that hospitals increase the risk of death. Kellermann's method would also prove that possession of insulin increases the risk of diabetes.

The media are complicit in many of these lies. Take, for example, the hysteria about so-called "assault weapons." Almost everything that gun-control advocates say about these firearms is a lie. The guns in question are not machine guns; they are simply ordinary guns with ugly cosmetics that give them a pseudo-military appearance. The guns do not fire faster than ordinary guns. The bullets they fire are not especially powerful; they are, in fact, smaller and travel at lower velocity than bullets from standard hunting rifles.

The media have succeeded in giving a totally different impression—through deliberate fraud. The CBS show *48 Hours* purported to show a semiautomatic rifle being converted to fully automatic—i.e., turned into a machine gun—in just nine minutes. But the gun shown at the beginning was not the same gun that was fired at the end of the demonstration. An expert from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) later said that such a conversion was impossible. And in Denver, KMGH television filmed people firing automatic weapons and told viewers that the guns were semiautomatics.

The chief culprits are not the media but the antigun lobbyists themselves, some of whom have very little compunction about lying—even in cases where it can be proven rather easily that they are aware of the truth while spreading the falsehood. For example, in February 1989, a former BATF employee who had become a paid consultant for Handgun Control testified to Congress that "assault weapons" were rarely used in crimes. (He wanted to ban them anyway, as a precautionary measure.) Nevertheless, within weeks, Handgun Control was running an advertising campaign insisting that assault weapons were the criminal weapons of choice.

The most dangerous dishonesty concerns the ultimate intentions of the antigun forces. Handgun Control claims that it merely wants to "keep guns out of the wrong hands"; yet in 1999, it lobbied hard to preserve Washington, D.C.'s outright ban on handguns. Back in 1976, the group's then leader, Pete Shields, explained the long-term strategy to

The New Yorker: "The first problem is to slow down the number of handguns being produced and sold in this country. The second problem is to get handguns registered. The final problem is to make possession of all handguns and all handgun ammunition—except for the military, police, licensed security guards, licensed sporting clubs, and licensed gun collectors—totally illegal."

Sarah Brady, the current chairwoman of Handgun Control, has said that people should not be allowed to own guns for self-defense. Yet in debates, employees of the group steadfastly deny that the organization believes in the policies articulated by its leaders.

In short, they are lying about what they want to accomplish. This is understandable, to be sure; but not honorable, or right for the country. **NR**

Shot Dead

How Colt was done in

JOHN J. MILLER

WHEN a senior executive from Colt's Manufacturing stood beside Pat Schroeder and other Democratic members of Congress at a Washington press conference in 1996, reporters showed up in droves to cover the event. Here was one of America's most storied gun companies cuddling up to antigun zealots in the name of promoting so-called smart guns. The press tossed hosannas to everybody as it described a wonderful future in which all guns would be "smart"—i.e., inoperable by unauthorized users, such as kids and thieves. "This technology gives me hope that we can figure out a way to prevent gun deaths," said Schroeder.

Nearly four years later, there's still no smart gun—and there has been a major gun death, of sorts: Colt itself. The company—which has sold more than 30 million firearms since 1836, when 22-year-old Sam Colt won a patent for a revolver—announced in October that it would quit making almost all of its civilian handguns. It had become a casualty of antigun lawsuits. As Donald E. Zilkha, the owner of the Connecticut-based company, grumbled in a letter to the *Hartford Courant*, "In spite of our every effort at reasonableness and cooperation, the state continues to make it difficult for us to conduct business and, in fact, is threatening to sue us."

So that's what Colt got for trying to reach an accommodation with its enemies. One more litigant—the state of Connecticut—would hardly have mattered; more than two dozen cities and counties were already targeting the company when it decided to cease most of its handgun production. And they gloated when Colt made its announcement. "That is just the beginning," said Chicago mayor Richard Daley. "This has been a multimillion-dollar corporation

that has [inflicted] a lot of havoc, a lot of death and injuries in America and throughout the world."

An astonishing statement, that. Colt isn't some fly-by-night maker of cheap Saturday-night specials—it's a part of American history. There's an old saying, often repeated by the company's admirers: "Abe Lincoln may have freed all men, but Sam Colt made them equal." The West was tamed with Colt guns, and generations of U.S. soldiers have carried them into battle. Mayor Daley apparently thinks the GIs should have been suing the Nazis rather than shooting them.

Then again, lawsuits can be deadly. "We have had to face the harsh reality of the significant impact which our litigation defense costs are having on our ability to operate competitively in the marketplace," said Colt in a sad, explanatory letter to distributors last fall. Lawsuits against Colt also effectively rubbed out its smart gun, the one whose prototype all the gun-controllers posed with on Capitol Hill four years ago. As recently as last year, Colt suggested that it might have a civilian smart gun available by 2003. The problem was coming up with the millions of dollars needed for research and development. The litigation made it impossible to raise funds.

And there could be a lot of money in smart guns, especially if politicians start to write laws insisting on them. Such laws have already been discussed in state legislatures. In a March primary debate, George W. Bush responded to a question on what he planned to do about child gun deaths by mentioning the emerging technology: "I think the ultimate solution is for . . . smart guns to be manufactured that require a certain handprint in order for the gun to be used."

Colt had hoped to develop a product that would work not by handprint recognition, but by a unique radio transmitter worn as a wristband. This is trickier than it sounds; a gun's forceful kickback makes it difficult for delicate electronics inside the gun to function reliably. Imagine whacking a garage-door opener with a baseball bat after each use. What's more, the miniaturized technology has to be affordable. When the first generation of smart guns goes on the market—one company may have a shotgun activated by magnetic ring in stores later this year—the price will be hefty. And consider the huge risks of a company putting its name on a weapon that might stop firing, not because it has run out of ammo, but because a few rough jerks have scrambled its microchip. Old-fashioned dumb guns will look pretty smart in comparison.

Before giving up, Colt had actually won a \$500,000 federal grant for smart-gun development; but that was merely a fraction of what it needed. And the company was pouring more of its resources into lawyers' fees than smart guns. This had repercussions outside Colt's offices in West Hartford, too. Insurance companies started to balk at covering the manufacturer. Last fall, as Colt was shutting down its civilian-handgun lines and laying off scores of workers, it tried to spin off its smart-gun division as a separate company, iColt. Despite the cyber-sounding name, this was no dotcom stock offering; investors simply

weren't interested in a company facing litigation modeled on the tobacco industry's ordeal, so iColt quickly flopped.

The cities and counties suing gun makers over the cost of urban crime claim they just want to make their streets safer. Several of them, in fact, have said manufacturers must reserve 1 percent of their revenues for smart-gun development as a condition of settlement. But if they were at all sincere, they might have chosen not to name Colt as a defendant. Here, after all, is a company that has pioneered smart-gun technology, sometimes over the objections of other companies worried that politicians will legislate expensive changes to how ordinary guns are made and sold.

In fact, Colt has for years been seen by some of its competitors as a bit too "socially responsible" (as one ex-Colt employee put it) for its own good. "I fully expected Colt would be the first company to make a deal with the Clinton administration, not Smith & Wesson [which was, in fact, the first]," says one gun-industry official. Just over two years ago, Ronald Stewart, who was then Colt's chief



What did Colt get for trying to reach an accommodation with its enemies? The demise of the company, that's what.

executive, published an editorial in a trade magazine imploring gun companies to support a federal gun-licensing system. Colt owner Zilkha contributed \$2,000 to the successful Senate campaign of Chuck Schumer, a New York Democrat who had made his name crusading against guns, as well as \$10,000 to the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee. This apostasy inspired many gun buyers to call for a boycott of Colt. Word spread on the Internet. The privately held company won't say much about its financial health, but it's clear these moves affected its bottom line. Doug Kiesler, a gun wholesaler who has been one of Colt's biggest customers, told the *Wall Street Journal* last year that his Colt sales were off 20 percent.

The company is not about to go under, though. It is now refocusing on the low-profit military contracts that currently provide most of its revenue. The company also continues to make a few expensive handguns for collectors and rodeo performers. There's a Colt computer game, too.

But leaving the civilian handgun market doesn't end Colt's problems. Those lawsuits are still pending, and more may be on the way. Colt emerged from bankruptcy only six years ago, and it has a history of lousy management and poor labor relations.

In 1994, Colt moved out of its longtime home in downtown Hartford, abandoning a brick plant whose onion-shaped bronze dome was topped by a bucking colt. The armory's still there, and it remains a distinctive architectural landmark. But it is empty of life. Like the company that used to fill it, it can only hint at its former glory. **NR**

One Drop—Still

A racist's Census

STEPHAN THERNSTROM

THE United States is the only country in the world in which a white woman can give birth to a black baby but a black woman cannot give birth to a white baby." Not long ago, when the civil-rights movement was unquestionably on the side of the angels, liberals were fond of pointing that out, with a mixture of dismay and smugness. How stupid! they said. You were deemed black if either of your parents was black. Indeed, you were deemed black even if your only black ancestor was one great-grandparent—the infamous "one drop" rule made it so.

That rule was essential to the either-or logic of the Jim Crow system, in which being only part-black was as inconceivable as being part-pregnant. Nor was there room for people with other racial identities; those who were not white were thrown into the category of—as the Census Bureau traditionally termed it—"Negroes and other races." Under this system, if you recognized the remarkably mixed ancestry of a Tiger Woods, what public school would you assign him to? Where would you have him sit on the bus?

Jim Crow is now dead, but its legacy lives on in current racial-classification practices. Ironically, though, it is now those on the left, who are pleased to call themselves liberals, who insist that we all belong in rigid, mutually exclusive, color-coded compartments. Their views, alas, are reflected in the decisions made recently about the Census of 2000, now in mailboxes throughout the country.

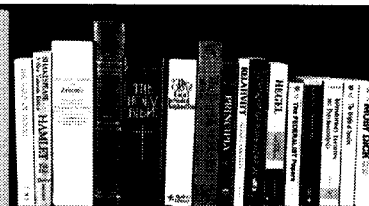
In the past, the Census Bureau was not totally oblivious to the reality of the American marital melting pot. To the question about "ancestry or ethnic origin" that appeared in both the 1980 and 1990 Censuses, it was allowable to give as many as three answers. You could report your ancestry as German, Italian, and Irish, or as Polish, Greek, and Swedish. But when it came to identifying yourself racially, no such latitude was given. The "races" of the United States were assumed to be mutually exclusive categories, and you could name only one.

This rigid rule came under growing criticism in the 1990s because of the spectacular surge in intermarriage between Americans of different "races." In some Asian groups—not so long ago categorized as "Orientals" and forbidden to marry non-Asians in some states—a majority of current marriages are to non-Asians, mostly whites.

Mr. Thernstrom is Winthrop Professor of History at Harvard and a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute. He and his wife Abigail are editors of *Beyond the Color Line: New Perspectives on Race and Ethnicity*, to be published by the Hoover Institution Press in June.

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THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE

Fully half of all American Indians today are married to non-Indians. Even black/white intermarriages, once illegal in all southern states and taboo in all but the most cosmopolitan communities, are by now far from uncommon. More than one in eight African Americans who married in 1994 had white spouses, and that figure is doubtless higher by now. The rapid growth in the number of children born of racially mixed unions, and the resentment of their parents at being forced to put the child in just one racial box, forced the planners of the 2000 Census to recognize the new reality. It would now be possible, they announced, for racially mixed Americans to identify with more than one racial group when they fill out their forms.

In the infighting that led up to the decision, the battle to preserve the old, mutually exclusive conception of race was led, not by white dinosaurs, but by the major civil-rights organizations. If a significant proportion of African Americans reported themselves as partly white, they worried, it could mean fewer affirmative-action slots at colleges and universities, fewer jobs for black applicants, a smaller share of public contracts set aside for black-owned businesses, fewer safe black seats on city councils, in state legislatures, and in Congress. All of these programs take proportional representation as the goal, so a decline in the total numbers of a minority group means a reduced entitlement.

■

It is breathtaking to find old ideas about 'blood' now resuscitated by the Left. We have come a long, long way from the days of *Brown*.

■

In a 1995 *Vanderbilt Law Review* article, an African-American attorney pursued the implications of the new "civil rights" position on this issue to its appalling but logical conclusion. Since race was now being used to award societal benefits, and properly so, he argued, it was necessary to devise new legal tools to prevent "racial fraud." Whites would have a much better chance of getting into the school of their choice or of finding a desirable job if they claimed they were black. To prevent that, the author called for a stricter racial-classification system for all Americans, with "fines and immediate job or benefit termination" for those who "falsified their racial identity." What was needed was a new body of law that recognized the "permanent importance" of racial divisions.

Of course, many of our states had such laws before; these laws were essential to the Jim Crow system. For example, a 1924 Virginia statute required statewide racial registration and provided a year in jail as the penalty for making a "false" report of one's racial identity. Obviously, this was designed to discourage blacks from attempting to "pass" as white. One of the arguments advanced by the plaintiffs in *Plessy v. Ferguson* was that Homer Plessy was entitled to sit in the "white" railroad car because he *was* white, being only one-eighth black. But the Supreme Court was not

impressed, declaring that it was up to the state of Louisiana to decide "the proportion of colored blood necessary to constitute a colored person." To be one-eighth black in Louisiana was to be black—that was that. It is breathtaking to find old ideas about "blood" now resuscitated in a respectable law review, and by an African-American scholar. The fear now is that whites will try to "pass" as black. We have come a long, long way from the days of the *Brown* litigation, when Thurgood Marshall insisted that "classifications and distinctions based upon race or color have no moral or legal validity in our society."

Fortunately, the attempts of the civil-rights organizations to preserve "racial purity" were unsuccessful. The Census Bureau agreed to modify the instructions that accompanied the race question on the 2000 Census, and to indicate that it was possible to choose two or even more racial identities. Homer Plessy could say that he was both white and black, if he chose. Racially mixed Americans would be counted as they wished to be counted.

"Counted" in the simple sense that they may record their perceptions of their own racial identity. But what they report themselves to be, it has now become clear, will be of no *practical* import. The Office of Management and Budget has just issued guidelines governing how all federal agencies are to employ the racial and ethnic data gathered on the 2000 Census. Those guidelines reveal that the civil-rights lobby lost the battle but won the war. When it comes to figuring out the racial composition of the population for purposes of "civil rights monitoring and enforcement" (i.e., to set quotas, goals, or targets in education, employment, and public contracting, and to determine whether racial minorities can claim that their right to political representation has been "diluted"), the complex identifications of racially mixed Americans will be ignored.

Though the Bureau will not tabulate data for every possible racial combination, it will keep track of a mind-boggling 63, so that we will have figures, for example, on the number of people who consider themselves part-white, part-black, and part-American Indian. But when the figures are to be used to determine whether civil-rights laws have been violated, these distinctions will disappear. Citizens who say they are not only white but also a member of a "minority race" will be counted as belonging to the "minority race"—period. In other words, for these purposes, it is still the case that "a white woman can give birth to a black baby but a black woman cannot give birth to a white baby." If you have enough black or Asian "blood" to mention it on the census form at all, you will be put in the black or Asian column that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and similar agencies will be using to decide whether some company has "enough" employees of the right kind.

This decision means that civil-rights groups need not fear that the number of their constituents will be reduced. Indeed, they will grow, if Americans of mixed race who reported themselves simply as white on past censuses now choose to mention that they have black ancestry as well. That mention will land them in the black column.

The most dramatic, indeed bizarre, effect will be on the

enumeration of the American Indian population. A mere 2.1 million people checked the "American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut" box on the 1990 Census race question. That is the figure everyone uses for the Indian population in that year. But the separate question about "ancestry or ethnic origin" on the same Census, on which multiple choices were possible, yielded a staggering 8.7 million people who claimed to have some Indian ancestors. If all of the additional 6.6 million identify themselves as both Indian and something else on the 2000 Census race question, now that multiple race choices are possible, the Indian-population figures used for purposes of civil-rights enforcement will suddenly *quadruple*. And most of these born-again Indians will be thoroughly assimilated Americans who have no contact or cultural connection to any Indian tribe today; but they will now count as if they had never left the reservation.

Some of us hoped that making it possible to give multiple answers to the race question would reveal a picture of such intricate complexity that it would call into question the very effort to divide us all into racial boxes. Sadly, our federal government today is attempting to prevent this fate, by retabulating the raw information in a manner that seems designed to ensure the "permanent importance"—as that *Vanderbilt Law Review* contributor put it—of race.

Deplorable though this is, it is too simple to say flatly that we should stop gathering any information at all about the racial and ethnic composition of the U.S. population. I have been strongly tempted to take the abolitionist position on this issue, and I respect Ward Connerly and others who do. I'm certainly disgusted to see that Americans who have been sent the Census short form—and they are five out of six of us—are asked to provide virtually no information *except* what racial box they belong in. Nevertheless, I have regretfully concluded that it is impractical and unwise to go to the extreme that many of my comrades in the anti-preference camp advocate.

Why? As early as the middle of the 19th century, the United States made its decennial census into something more than a simple head count of the population. The 1850 Census was the first to inquire into such matters as who had been born abroad and in what country, the occupations Americans were engaged in, and the school attendance of their children. Subsequent enumerations added questions about income and unemployment, housing, modes of travel to work, and dozens of other topics. All modern societies have felt compelled to compile such information, not least because businesses find such information extremely useful. The libertarian view that none of these matters is a proper concern of government is hopelessly utopian.

Even if all racial and ethnic questions were removed from the census, surely we would continue to hear complaints that blacks are far more likely than other Americans to live in poverty. Indeed, in the absence of authoritative data, the magnitude of such social problems would likely be even more exaggerated. Even with official statistics, a recent Gallup poll found that the American public thought that 32 percent of the population was black and 21 percent Hispanic (more than double the actual figures). Further-

more, it is only by gathering the facts that we are able to discern the close connection between black poverty, the remarkably high proportion of female-headed black families, and the huge racial gap in levels of literacy and numeracy. Surely we want to know if black third-graders are far behind whites in reading and math competence, and the correlation between that difference and family structure or economic circumstances. It is at least *possible* that social-science knowledge will guide us towards solutions.

The problem, then, is not with the gathering of social and economic facts. The problem is what might be termed the "the privileging of race." The idea that mankind is divided into a very few, physically and culturally distinctive, racial groups is a thoroughly outmoded and discredited 19th-century notion. In setting out the officially recognized racial categories, the Office of Management and Budget cautions that "these classifications should not be interpreted as being scientific or anthropological in nature." That's for sure—but this admission only makes OMB's decision to use them more dubious. If these categories are *not* "scientific" or "anthropological," what are they? Why should the U.S. government distinguish some citizens from others on a basis that is not "scientific" or even "anthropological" (whatever that means) and use these distinctions in allocating public resources? "Race" is

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**Most of these born-again Indians will be
thoroughly assimilated Americans, but they
will count as if they had never left the rez.**

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a bad idea whose time has come and gone. It does not belong in statistics that appear with the stamp of approval of the government of the United States.

Ethnicity (as distinct from crude, unidimensional race categories), however, is another matter. We cannot pretend that African Americans are not a distinctive group with an uniquely oppressive history they are still struggling to overcome, nor that Chinese Americans or Ukrainian Americans are like everyone else in every way. But we need not assume that Americans of Chinese origins are a separate "race," while classifying Ukrainians as "white." The census question on "ancestry or ethnic origin" is quite sufficient to identify subgroups of the population, and it will do the job nicely—with one important modification.

In the past, the Census Bureau has framed the instructions on the ancestry question in a manner that discourages the response "American." Despite that discouragement, 13 million people—5 percent of the population—said that their ancestry was "American" or "United States" on the 1990 Census, and another 27 million—11 percent of the population—said that were unable or unwilling to specify any ancestry. If it were made clear that "American" is a perfectly acceptable response, those numbers might soar. And that would not be a bad thing at all.

NR

Flashpoints

Notes on the present danger

HUMPHREY HAWKSLEY

A YEAR ago, I traveled through the Indian subcontinent, talking to dozens of people about the prospect of nuclear war between India and Pakistan. It soon became blindingly obvious that scientists, military men, and officials in both countries believed war was inevitable. Some even advocated a showdown, nuclear or otherwise, to end the low-intensity conflict that has ebbed and flowed for the past 50 years. It was blamed for keeping the development of both countries shamefully behind that of their neighbors in more affluent East Asia.

In the Pakistani capital of Islamabad, I spent an evening with a nuclear physicist. "The explosion would be comparable to Hiroshima," he said. "But India's population density is such that a million could be killed with just one strike."

The next day I was given afternoon tea by a retired Pakistani diplomat, a well-traveled and urbane man who now happens to be a senior official in the new military government. "The problem is the Islamic fanatics coming in from Iran, Yemen, Algeria," he said. "We are losing control of them, and they could do something that India would have to react to." He was in favor of Pakistan's doubling its nuclear capacity, and we ended up on the floor of his living room poring over a map to determine how the war would start. His finger trailed down the disputed border areas of Kashmir, which is claimed by both Pakistan and India and has been the focus of conflict since partition and independence in 1947.

The night before I flew on to Delhi, I met with a senior Pakistani intelligence official who had once been used by the CIA to run *mujahedin* guerrillas into Afghanistan against the Soviet forces. When the Afghan conflict wound up, he turned his attention to Kashmir and helped reignite the insurgency there. "What is Pakistan doing to stop the *mujahedin* fighters getting involved in Kashmir?" I asked. "They are freedom fighters," he replied. "We will encourage them. We will demand they come to help us liberate Kashmir—and it is not just Kashmir." His son nodded enthusiastically: "You should go to the villages," he urged. "They are calling for a Khomeini to lead Pakistan out of its misery."

"They want an Islamic revolution, you mean?"

"Of course. If the people came onto the streets against our corrupt leaders, the army would back the people. Pakistan would be a great nation with the army in charge again."

A month later, Pakistani troops crossed the international frontier into Indian-controlled Kashmir, prompting some of the bloodiest fighting to date. Five months later, the army took power in Pakistan.

Mr. Hawksley is a world-affairs correspondent for the BBC and has written several books on Asia, including the recently published *Dragon Strike*.

THE PERILOUS PROVINCE

Kashmir is one of the most beautiful places in the world. At this time of the year, it is alive with spring flowers, budding fruit trees, and streams gushing with freshly melted mountain snow. The air is crisp and clean against the filth of Delhi and the other South Asian mega-cities. Yet for the past ten years, it has been a place of war, and for the past two, it has been the potential flashpoint for nuclear war. President Clinton referred to it as "the most dangerous place in the world today."

The Kashmiris themselves are starkly attractive people who have become victims of a botched colonial inheritance. In that respect, they are no different from victims of ethnic and religious discord anywhere, be it Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland, the Balkans, or Chechnya. Kashmir is predominantly Muslim, yet ruled by predominantly Hindu India. Pakistan fuels its war of separation; but polls of Kashmiris suggest that all they want is to be left alone with some form of self-rule.

Sadly, they have little say in their own future because for both India and Pakistan too much is at stake. If Pakistan compromises, it risks the wrath of Islamic-fundamentalist forces that are working their way into the impoverished villages in the name of jihad. If India compromises, it envisages the collapse of its multicultural society, particularly among the 130 million Muslims who live in India. Perhaps it is no coincidence, then, that Indian democracy has now thrown off the veil of secularism and voted in the BJP, a Hindu nationalist party, to lead the government. In clichéd shorthand, a Hindu state faces a Muslim state. One has a Hindu bomb, the other a Muslim one.

It is this nuclear specter that has pulled Kashmir so suddenly to the top of the pile of ethnic insurgencies, focusing minds in Washington and belatedly propelling President Clinton to Delhi and Islamabad. His visit arguably marks the most significant shift in strategic thinking since the end of the Cold War, comparable to President Nixon's visit to China in 1972.

During the Cold War, India technically remained non-aligned. But given the polarization of the era, the United States viewed it as hostile, and India forged a close relationship with the Soviet Union. Russia is still a major ally, supplying the backbone of India's military equipment. Pakistan fell into the American camp. But it was a tenuous relationship because of Pakistan's chaotic tapestry of military dictatorship, Islam, and failed Western-style democracy. Having been showered with gifts of military equipment and aid, Pakistan often found those gifts withdrawn on what it saw as the whim of American policy. When at war with India in 1965, Pakistan was left without American spare parts and new equipment. In 1990, after a close relationship during the Afghan war, the U.S. imposed sanctions because of suspicions about Pakistan's nuclear program. "It was like a series of stabs in the back," Gen. Mirza Aslam Beg, a former army chief of staff, told me in Islamabad. "I regret that we ever danced to the tune of the United States."

Pakistan balanced its reliance on the U.S. by seeking a close relationship with China, which is as strong today as it has ever been. China supplies Pakistan with its main battle-field tanks, artillery, and fighter aircraft. It has also been accused of giving Pakistan the technology with which to build nuclear weapons. China denies the allegation, but in

intelligence circles it is widely accepted to be the case.

As Kashmir is a flashpoint between India and Pakistan, so there is another flashpoint that could spark a conflict between India and China. Tibet is the simmering volcano wedged between those two countries. In many ways it is more volatile than Kashmir, because of the emotion the Tibetan cause engenders in Western democracies and the sanctuary given to the Dalai Lama and his followers by India. While America's proactive policy over Kashmir is motivated by nuclear concerns that have not yet touched general public consciousness in the West, trouble in Tibet would throw up more difficult choices. Policy would have to be addressed on moral and humanitarian grounds, as it was in Kosovo and Timor, though China is no Serbia or Indonesia when it comes to international relations. Although the Dalai Lama is sworn to nonviolence, the younger generation is not.

Pause for a moment to examine how the strands of global affairs stretch seamlessly from the killing fields of Kashmir, through the restless Tibetan plateau, on to high-tech investment industries in Beijing and Shanghai, and then to Taiwan, with its confident new leaders. Little wonder that President Clinton conceded that the relationship between India and the United States had been neglected for too long, and that he welcomed India's leadership in both regional and world affairs.

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**Examine how the strands of global affairs
stretch seamlessly from the killing fields of
Kashmir, through the restless Tibetan plateau,
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Geographically, Tibet and Kashmir are worryingly close and, given the military alliance between Pakistan and China, cannot be taken as separate theaters of policy. Along the Sino-Indian border there are pockets of disputed territory, ranging from desolate land occupied by Chinese troops to swaths of northeastern India claimed by China. The two countries fought a brief border war in 1962, which India lost. Relations have been cool ever since, and the Indian defense minister, George Fernandes, has described China as its most serious potential threat. "China has provided Pakistan with both missiles and nuclear know-how," he says. "China has its nuclear weapons stockpiled in Tibet right along our borders. There has also been a lot of elongation of military airfields in Tibet. Then on the eastern frontier of India with Burma, the Chinese are training and equipping the Burmese army. On the western coast of Burma, there is a lot of naval activity, constructing harbors that can take Chinese ships. There's no doubt in my mind that China's fast-expanding navy, which will be the biggest navy in this part of the world, will be getting into the Indian Ocean fairly soon."

This scenario has now been taken up by policymakers in Washington.

India, a democracy, feels threatened by the nondemocratic governments of China and Pakistan. After courting and

engaging China for so many years, the United States is finally acknowledging the long-term challenge from Beijing and seeking to balance that in a new friendship with India, very much as it sought out China as part of its Cold War policy against the Soviet Union.

NERVOUS TIMES

The week that President Clinton toured India was a watershed of Asia's future. In Kashmir, 35 Sikh farmers were ordered out of their homes and shot dead, underlining the acute danger in allowing the conflict to continue unchecked. Far to the east in Taiwan, the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party won the presidential elections, showing that the rebel island state would not be intimidated by threats of invasion from China. The government of Vietnam chewed over a visit by the American defense secretary, William Cohen, who urged Vietnam and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to put pressure on China and encourage Beijing toward moderation in its foreign policy. "China, by virtue of its sheer size," said Cohen, "is going to emerge as a much more influential power than it is today. I think one of the very important and beneficial aspects of ASEAN is that you have collective interests, and those collective interests can in fact, if you act in concert, give considerable leverage in dealing with China on a peaceful and cooperative basis."

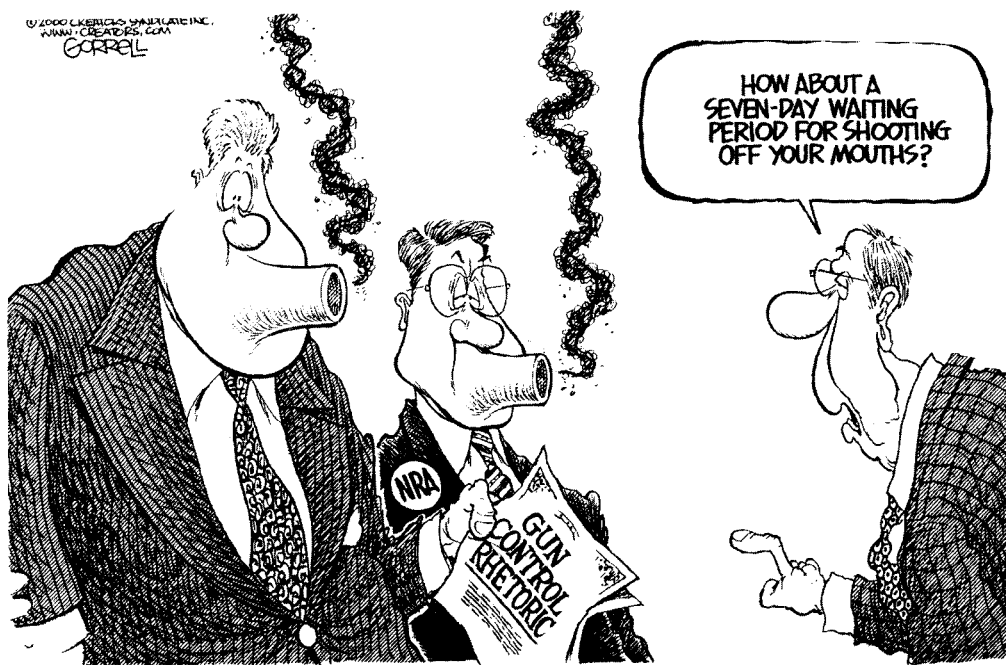
The message could not have been more thinly veiled.

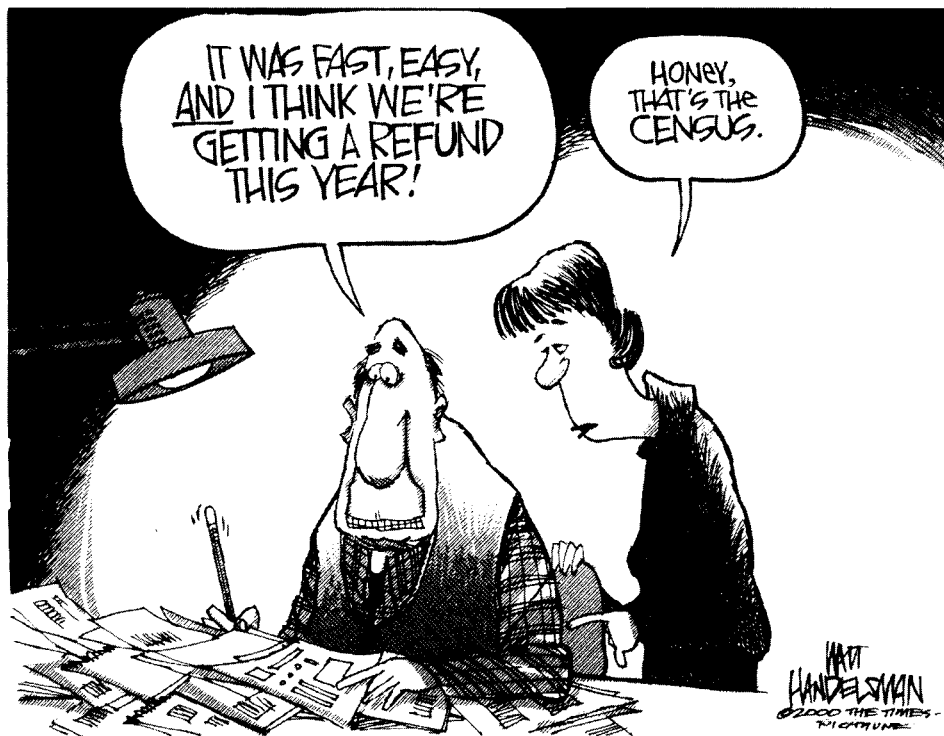
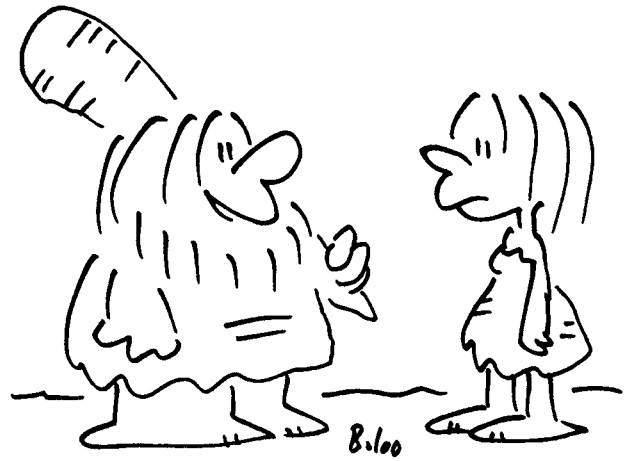
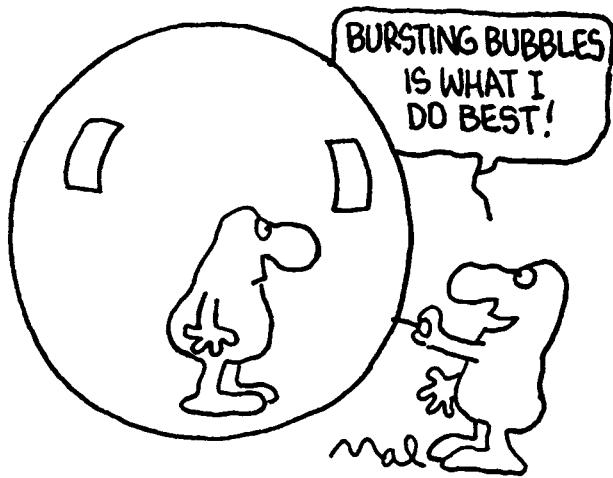
In Washington, the CIA director, George Tenet, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that not only Russia, but also China, now had nuclear missiles that could strike anywhere in the United States. And in Delhi, President Clinton wooed India as a great nation with lessons to teach the world about democracy, diversity, and globalization. "Here is a country," he told the Indian parliament, "where more than 2 million people hold elected office in local government. A country that shows at every election that those who possess the least, cherish their vote the most. Far from washing away the uniqueness of your culture, your democracy has brought out the richness of its tapestry and given you the knot that holds it together."

It was no coincidence that President Clinton put India's democracy far above its nuclear-weapons program, saying of the latter only: "You are a great nation and you must decide." It was no coincidence that he played the role of tourist and listener, traveling far outside of Delhi to look at tiger sanctuaries, dusty poor villages, and cyberspace industries. Nor was it a coincidence that the secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, flew straight from Delhi to Geneva, where she gave China a public rap over the knuckles for worsening human-rights abuses.

A year ago, as I traveled around India, there was an uncertainty as to which country the United States would back if India and Pakistan headed toward all-out war, indeed if India and China headed toward conflict. That uncertainty is still there. It will take years for the institutions of India and America to work smoothly together. But for the first time, ideological fundamentals have been put in place: America supports democracies, and India is the world's biggest. Any nation challenging that alliance is likely to come in for a rough ride. **NR**

HELP!!!





FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

DOCUMENT EXTRACT—OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT

March 27, 2000

Interview with the Vice President of the United States

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Special Agent Malley: And at what point, sir, were the differences between so-called “hard money” and “soft money” discussed?

Vice President of the United States: Discussed in what sense?

SA MALLEY: In the sense of talked about, or mentioned.

VPOTUS: Oh, I see. Yes. Now I understand your meaning.

SA MALLEY: Sir?

VPOTUS: Yes?

SA MALLEY: If I could just get an answer, sir.

VPOTUS: Agent, I’m answering all of your questions, okay? I am being cooperative here.

SA MALLEY: Sir . . .

VPOTUS: We’re doing all we can here.

SA MALLEY: If I could just get an answer, sir, as to when you were briefed on the differences.

VPOTUS: The differences between what, agent?

SA MALLEY: Soft money and hard money.

VPOTUS: Oh, yes. Of course.

[silence]

SA MALLEY: Sir?

VPOTUS: Hmmm

SA MALLEY: Can I get an answer?

VPOTUS: Of course.

[silence]

SA MALLEY: Sir?

VPOTUS: Oh, you mean from me? I’m sorry. What was the question again?

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VPOTUS: . . . at which time several of the gang started talking about fund-raising legality issues, and I distinctly remember Maria saying, “Hey, let’s get into the issues of hard money and soft money.” And then I asked for another iced tea, and Maria said, “If you keep drinking all that iced tea, you’re going to turn into a glass of iced tea yourself!” And we roared over that one. Maria’s a cutup. Just a funny, funny woman. I hope she doesn’t lose her sense of humor in prison.

SA MALLEY: So at what point did the discussion resume?

VPOTUS: Hard to say. I was drinking a lot of iced tea, that’s for sure. And so I had to go to the rest room a lot. So I may have missed some of the important stuff.

SA MALLEY: You were drinking iced tea and so you had to go to the rest room?

VPOTUS: A lot.

SA MALLEY: I understand.

VPOTUS: Maria was funny about that. She said, “Mr. Vice President, you know what they say. You don’t buy iced tea, you rent it!” Boy, is she a wit. You don’t think they’re going to put her in one of those maximum-security deals, do you?

SA MALLEY: I couldn’t say, sir. Now, if we could return to the meeting. In the notes—

VPOTUS: C’m on, Agent Malley! This is old news! There’s no “there” there. Don’t you read the Post? Or the New York Times? Or watch CBS, NBC, ABC, CNN?

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VPOTUS: . . . and I remember saying to the gang, “Hey, just a sec, let me take one of these super-strong antihistamines and THEN let’s get down to the nitty-gritty stuff about rules and regulations and stuff.” See, I didn’t want to be sneezing and wheezing through what I knew was going to be a very important briefing. Well, stupid old me took that medication—prescribed, may I add, by a certified medical doctor—without the requisite full stomach, and, well, I was drowsy and sleepy and—have you ever taken one of those allergy pills, agent?

SA MALLEY: I don’t suffer from allergies, sir.

VPOTUS: Well, let me tell you, I was out! I mean, they could have been talking about anything at all, and I wouldn’t recall a word of it!

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VPOTUS: . . . of course, I didn’t know it was a fundraiser. They were Buddhists! I just naturally assumed they had renounced worldly riches, along with desire and fear. I thought it was an “outreach” event.

SA MALLEY: To the Buddhist community?

VPOTUS: The Buddhist vote is very important. I don’t mean to be crass—I respect all of the world’s religions—but as go the Buddhists, so go the Sikhs, the Jains, the Vedantists . . .

SA MALLEY: And at no point did the monetary nature of the event become evident to you?

VPOTUS: A political campaign is a whirlwind of events—media stops, outreach . . . it would take someone with an IQ well above 200—and mine’s way up there—to keep track of it all. This was before I had a Palm Pilot.

SA MALLEY: But you do read your schedule, correct?

VPOTUS: Agent, I’m the most hands-on vice president in this nation’s history.

SA MALLEY: Your schedule, sir, describes the temple visit as a “fund-raiser.”

VPOTUS: Where?

SA MALLEY: There, sir.

VPOTUS: Oh, yes, I see. Will you excuse me a moment, agent? I guess I had too much coffee this morning.

[Footsteps. Door closing.]

END EXTRACT

BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

Inside Dope

BOB ZELNICK

Inventing Al Gore: A Biography, by Bill Turque (Houghton Mifflin, 448 pp., \$25)

By historic standards, Al Gore should be entering the next stage of the presidential campaign light years ahead of George W. Bush. The country is experiencing an unprecedented economic boom. Polls suggest that such issues as managing the economy, improving education, controlling guns, and keeping abortion legal cut in the Democrats' favor. Further, Gore's primary campaign left him toned and fit, like a boxing champ who has spent three skill-sharpening rounds sparring with his "bum of the month." Bush has just been pummeled by a political Joe Frazier and a press corps that wanted him whupped.

Yet Gore enjoys no such lead. The reason: People simply don't like him. He is in a statistical dead heat with his Republican opponent, and Gore has high negatives. Many voters appear ready to bolt to Bush the moment they become convinced he is more than an empty suit with a mind to match. Clearly the election is not Bush's to lose. But it may be his to win.

To do so Bush must recognize Gore's strengths. He is smart, indefatigable, and ruthless. He stays on message. He knows the issues cold. His team has long since consolidated his position with the core Democratic constituencies—labor, teachers, government workers, and African Americans. He knows that to make Bush look bad he will have to

Mr. Zelnick, a professor of journalism at Boston University, is the author of *Gore: A Political Life*.



Al Gore by Roman Genn

make Texas look bad, and to make him unelectable he will have to dominate him in discussion and debate. He is already hammering Bush proposals as dangerous and ill-considered products of an inexperienced state executive. But Gore also has plenty of weaknesses Bush can exploit, and *Newsweek* reporter Bill Turque chronicles many in his fine new biography, *Inventing Al Gore*.

First among these is Gore's off-putting tendency to reinvent himself as expediency demands. Turque reminds us that Gore began his first campaign for Congress in 1976 by "shedding the casual dishevelment of the Watergate-era investigative reporter" for the blue suit, oxford shirt, and red tie that would define his wooden appearance for the next two-and-a-half decades. That first campaign also involved a change of ideological garb. Suddenly the pot-smoking Harvard liberal who once enrolled in divinity school to "atone for my sins" as a soldier in Vietnam became a purveyor of conservative social values. Homosexuality, he proclaimed, was "abnormal." He also began a decade of support for right-to-life causes, declaring, "I don't believe a woman's freedom to live her own life, in all cases, outweighs the fetus's right to live." He opposed gun-

control proposals, confiding to his former city editor at the *Nashville Tennessean*, "Look, I'm running in a district where people favor guns, and there's no way I can win if I take a position that indicates that I'm going to take away their guns."

Young Gore won that first race using what Turque calls "an operating style that has remained largely intact for nearly 25 years: a relentless work ethic; tactical caution; passionate advocacy of worthy but low-risk issues; and a willingness to revise or simply muddy up politically inconvenient positions." Beginning with his 1988 race for the presidency, some of those earlier positions themselves became politically inconvenient, so more revision and muddying were needed. Confronted with his abortion record, for example, Gore simply lied, saying he had never held the views attributed to him. "What we have to do is deny, deny," an aide confided to *U.S. News & World Report*. "We've muddled the point, and with luck, attention will turn elsewhere."

When Turque found John Warnecke, a close Nashville friend of Gore and his wife Tipper, who recalled enjoying marijuana and hashish with Gore in the early '70s as often as four times a week, it took more than a lie to reinforce Gore's 1987 claim that his use of the weed had been "rare." Instead, political hatchet men were unleashed to smear Warnecke as a former alcoholic and mental patient with impaired credibility. None of these character assassins mentioned that it had been Warnecke and his wife who helped Tipper battle through depression while her husband was in Vietnam.

On one issue, Gore's politically motivated changes had serious consequences. In the 1980s, when a large paper manufacturer, Champion, was polluting the Pigeon River running from North Carolina into Tennessee, Gore

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urged the EPA to require a massive cleanup. Then came his 1988 presidential quest and the need to raise money in North Carolina and bring the state into his Super Tuesday column. Suddenly Gore reversed his stance and urged the EPA to accept a far milder company proposal. By the mid '90s, Champion had been forced to invest more than \$300 million in cleanup equipment and operations. But the environmental lobby wanted even tougher standards and threatened to treat Gore as a pariah unless he delivered. So Gore executed a reverse flip-flop and got the EPA to impose the pressure groups' demands. This left Champion with the choice of either selling or going bankrupt. Last year Champion employees bought the factory, spending their pension funds to save their jobs. One longtime area resident told Turque: "You could put 'two-faced son of a bitch' in *Webster's Dictionary* and put Al Gore's name beside it."

Turque has done some impressive reporting. We learn, for example, that Gore's beloved sister Nancy was an "untreated" alcoholic as well as a chain-smoker and that, inexplicably, immediately following her death, Gore told friends her lung cancer was not the sort that was related to smoking. The family, of course, continued to profit for several years from its tobacco crop; Gore himself received political contributions from the tobacco industry for seven more years.

We learn too that Gore's mother, Pauline LaFon Gore, had a brief, unhappy marriage before she met Albert Gore Sr. while both were in law school, and that as a young attorney in Texarkana she was subjected to sexual harassment. Somewhat credulously, Turque suggests that Gore's recollection of his mother's problem may have contributed to his sympathetic response to Anita Hill's later charges against Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas. On the floor of the Senate, Gore wondered aloud, "Why is it so surprising that a woman stayed silent rather than move to destroy her still-forming career by taking on a much more powerful and intimidating foe?" This laudable empathy deserted Gore in the cases of Paula Corbin Jones, Kathleen Willey, and Juanita Broadrick, three women who claimed credibly to have suffered

abuses far worse at the hands of Bill Clinton.

Turque offers evenhanded treatment of Gore's frantic 1992 bestseller *Earth in the Balance*, describing it as "essential Gore: thoughtful, earnest, ambitious, crammed with facts, moralizing, hyperbolic, and breathtakingly grandiose." The book, which offered Gore release from an assortment of midlife crises,

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**The book's title is
no accident: Gore invents
and reinvents himself
as the situation demands.**

■

identified global warming as a looming Holocaust, called for government-directed and -financed countermeasures of Marshall Plan dimension, and pronounced the automobile the gravest of all national-security threats. Gore's war against the internal-combustion engine went into remission during his lengthy quest to gain the support of the Teamsters and the UAW. But the book may yet come back to haunt him, with gasoline prices now soaring and his global-warming treaty lying around, an unratifiable monument to his *Earth in the Balance* mentality.

Turque treads fairly familiar ground in covering the vice-presidential years and related fundraising scandals. But a few points are worth underlining, beginning with Gore's massive reinventing-government exercise. In view of all the hype and spin that came from the vice president's office, it is striking how thoroughly Gore capitulated to the federal-employee unions on every issue of genuine reform. Whether one puts the number of government jobs eliminated at 250,000 or 320,000, not a single one belonged to a union member. Turque reaches the same conclusion: "The deal was essentially a cave to the unions, signaling that the administration would make no serious attempt to change civil service regulations that placed strict controls on how most federal employees were hired, fired, and disciplined."

Gore was, however, a sincere voice inside the White House for the New

Democrat point of view. He was not squeamish about using military power in places like Bosnia, Kosovo, and Haiti. He pushed the president to accept the Republican challenge to balance the federal budget. And he helped stampede welfare reform over the prostrate bodies of administration resisters and nearly two-thirds of the Democrats on Capitol Hill. The party of Bill Clinton and Al Gore has its political vulnerabilities, but it is becoming a fundamentally different party from the one created by the McGovern-Fraser reforms of 1972 and ridden into the ground in 1988 by Michael Dukakis.

Turque dutifully traces Gore's White House telephone solicitations to raise campaign funds and his appearance at the Hsi Lai Buddhist Temple in Los Angeles, the two frolics that nearly led Janet Reno to appoint an independent counsel. He concludes, charitably, that "Gore's zeal for election money in 1996 eroded his good judgment, sense of propriety, and usual attention to detail." In fact, Gore's "zeal" has long been perpetual and insatiable. Running for reelection to the Senate in 1990, for example, he encountered a weak GOP challenger who spent all of \$6,500 on the race. Gore's expenditure: \$1.6 million. By then, of course, Gore's principal Buddhist contact, Maria Hsia—recently convicted for her 1996 activities—was already involved in questionable fundraising practices.

Turque ignores one of the more interesting chapters in the Gore vice presidency: his successful effort to rid the primary field of his most dangerous potential challenger, House minority leader Richard Gephardt. Throughout most of the second Clinton term, the liberal Gephardt seemed intent on challenging Gore for the soul of the Democratic party, but by early last year he had taken himself out of the race. One reason clearly was to protect his claim to the speakership should Democrats capture the House. More important were defections among the top ranks of Big Labor, a key Gephardt constituency that had been substantially co-opted by Gore.

But the unions demanded their pound of flesh. Suddenly the man who had beaten Ross Perot in the great NAFTA debate went mushy on the follow-up



"fast track" trade bill that died at the hands of House Democrats. And as the campaign revved up and Clinton sought permanent most favored nation status for the Chinese—perhaps his most important remaining initiative—Gore privately assured union leaders that he would be tougher than the president in future bargaining sessions involving Chinese labor and environmental standards. Nothing could have provided a bigger boost to labor's efforts to block MFN in Congress.

Turque seems politically comfortable with many Gore positions. He endorses the vice president's offensive attack on opponents of race preferences at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in 1998, and suggests that the test of Gore's leadership as president might well be his ability to rally the nation behind his assault on global warming. Yet despite Turque's own manifest liberalism, his book nowhere conveys any sense of warmth or fondness for its subject. The book's title is no accident: Gore invents and reinvents himself as the situation demands. He hectors and talks down to opponents and audiences. He exploits the ordeals and even the deaths of his immediate family for political gain. He changes fundamental positions and denies having changed them. Before physical proof confirmed Clinton's involvement with Monica Lewinsky, Gore publicly maintained his belief in the truth of Clinton's denials. Yet in interviews and spin sessions conducted after he decided to distance himself from the president, Gore and his staff have suggested that he suspected Clinton of dissembling all along.

George W. Bush undoubtedly recognizes that values will be a vital part of the fall campaign: values that were defiled not so much by Bill Clinton as by Democrats like Gore who rushed to aid and comfort a man who lied to the courts, the Congress, his cabinet, his wife, and the American people. Bush might do well to remind voters how during the McCarthy era half of the Senate Republicans joined Democrats in condemning the Wisconsin senator, and how Nixon's fate was sealed when Republicans told him he could no longer count on their support after Watergate. Contrast that with the non-stop attacks on the independent counsel by

Democrats and their constant obstruction of efforts to gather the facts. Recall too the squalid spectacle of Democrats gathered at the White House following the impeachment vote, listening to Gore accuse Republicans of "partisan politics" and claiming that their action "does a great disservice to a man I believe will be regarded in the history books as one of our greatest presidents."

If Bush can manage—through a credible presentation of his positions on taxes, defense, and the judiciary—to persuade the nation that he has the

gravitas to be president, he could win despite Gore's real and apparent advantages. By Election Day the contest may resemble most closely that of 1976, where traditional constituencies of both parties returned to the fold, but where a small swing segment balanced its disgust with the ethics of the incumbent administration against its doubts that the challenger was up to the job. In 1976, that centrist sliver went narrowly for Jimmy Carter. How it goes this time will depend on what voters learn about George W. Bush. Al Gore is no mystery. **NR**

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This Bush Has Thorns

CHARLOTTE HAYS

Shrub: The Short but Happy Political Life of George W. Bush, by Molly Ivins and Lou Dubose (Random House, 179 pp., \$19.95)

JUST as my enthusiasm for George W. Bush was beginning to wane, along came Molly Ivins and Lou Dubose to breathe new life into my love affair. Not, of course, that this was their intention.

A *Nation* contributing editor and darling of the northeastern media elite, Ivins is like former Texas governor Ann Richards without the big hair: mean and wrong but often entertaining. Her less well-known coauthor, Lou Dubose, edits the *Texas Observer*, the famous liberal weekly now past its prime. A *New York Times* review calls *Shrub* "a useful, opinionated brief for the prosecution." But the book is so predictable that it doesn't really lay a glove on Bush. Indeed, ambivalent conservatives will find it a convincing brief for Bush.

Shrub portrays Bush as a man with a Midas touch when it came to raising money for his failed oil ventures. Ivins and Dubose quote a supposedly damning assessment from a Midland oil executive: "He could go to New York and talk people into giving him money. That made him a success." Most Democratic politicians go to Washington and talk

people into giving them money, and that's what makes *them* successes. The Washington money comes out of all our pockets. Bush's came from rich investors, many no doubt eager to cozy up to the president's family. But Bush's dry wells didn't cost *me* a dime.

"The single most common misconception about George W.," write Ivins and Dubose, "is that he has been running a large state for the past six years. Texas has what's known in political science circles as 'the weak governor system.'" This makes the job sound almost as useless as, say, the vice-presidency. But the book actually shows a highly effective leader who, whatever his powers, used them well. Behind the façade of a compassionate conservative is a man mean enough to be president.

I was bursting with pride as I read about Bush's stony refusal to so much as meet with Bianca Jagger when the glam crusader went to Texas to demand clemency for pickax murderess Karla Faye Tucker. (Bush has presided over 120 executions since becoming governor. Tucker became the first woman to be executed in Texas since the Civil War.) Bush was also commendably hardhearted when Renée Mullins, daughter of the vilely murdered James Byrd Jr., came to lobby him in favor of a hate-crimes bill. When Mullins confronted Bush in his office and asked if he was going to support the bill, he replied in a monosyllable: "No." It was a lachrymose, no-hugs scene. Ivins and Dubose quote a shocked witness: "She [Mullins] was crying, and he didn't try to console her or even offer her a Kleenex. He was cold, icy."

Ivins and Dubose admit that the hate-crimes bill was "a bad bill filled with dangerous provisions, including an expansion of the death penalty." Yet they believe it should have been passed anyway, "if only to reassure minority communities that the government cares what happens to them." Talk about pandering!

Ivins and Dubose are also appalled that Bush tried to end paroles for such heinous crimes as rape, child molestation, and murder. He failed, but during the months leading up to his second gubernatorial election he did put a tem-

porary stop to paroles for these crimes. Ivins and Dubose believe, possibly correctly, that this was a cynical attempt to prevent some parolee from committing an embarrassing crime as Willie Horton did on Gov. Michael Dukakis's watch.

As Dubose and Ivins see it, this hiatus in paroles had a tragic outcome. The authors tell the story of a trusty named Robert Hudspeth (whose crime—murder—they never reveal). Hudspeth, denied his "well-earned parole" by Gov. Bush, became so distraught that he "walked away from his trusty's job, stole a car, drove to Marble Falls, and hanged himself."

The authors give Bush deservedly high marks for working hard—and suc-

■
**Behind the façade of a
compassionate conservative
is a man mean enough
to be president.**
■

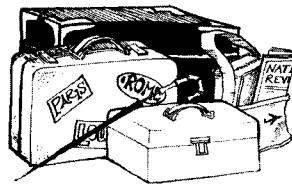
cessfully—to improve public education in Texas. Unlike Ann Richards, they note, Bush was willing to spend political capital in a bruising fight to reform the state's education code. "During legislative battles, he responded to every call and personally visited with state lawmakers in an effort to shape better education policy for the state." Laura Bush also receives plaudits for her involvement in the field of literacy: "Her sincerity and concern often make a deeper impression than more polished oratory."

Unfortunately, Bush the younger is the most inarticulate politician since Bush the elder. When asked about his plans to improve education, a theme of his cam-

paign, he urged a high-school student in South Carolina to "write your governor." This is a nod to the Republican credo that education is a local issue. But if Bush is to be effective against Al Gore, the message must be stated more compellingly.

W. is not, as the authors take pains to

Miss Hays is editor of *The Women's Quarterly*.



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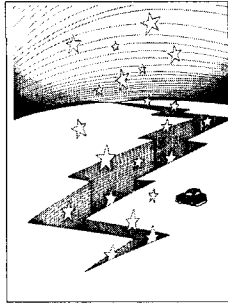
point out, a great reader. In addition to Christ, he admires the Manhattan Institute's Myron Magnet and born-again author and activist Marvin Olasky. Magnet believes that the poor have picked up bad habits from the rich and blames poverty on federal anti-poverty programs. Olasky, according to Ivins and Dubose, "sold Newt Gingrich on the idea that orphanages would be a swell place to rear children." To counteract such nefarious influences, Ivins and Dubose propose a reading list for Bush: Oscar Lewis, Kenneth Clark, Robert Coles, Michael Harrington, Jonathan Kozol, William Julius Wilson, Frances Fox Piven, and Nicholas Lemann—in other words, the standard pantheon of liberals.

Though Ivins can be an entertaining writer, there are many patches in *Shrub* that are drier than Texas dust. In a section on the B.C.C.I. scandal, the authors breathlessly reveal that Bush and his Harken oil company pals had "numerous links" to "individuals close to B.C.C.I." They likewise report that Bush parlayed a \$600,000 investment in the Texas Rangers baseball team into \$15 million over a number of years. This development is well documented and perfectly legal, but they compare it unfavorably with Hillary Clinton's murky and improbable stock-market triumph, which turned a \$1,000 investment into \$100,000 quicker than you can say "illegal political favor." According to the authors, Bush's return on his original Rangers investment "makes commodities futures look like peanuts."

This kind of double standard isn't unique to Ivins and Dubose. The national press will endeavor to paint Bush's completely legal fundraising as morally reprehensible in the coming months. Bush's ability to raise money, along with the Bob Jones University visit, will be the lines of attack by a muscle-flexing media establishment that feigns objectivity less and less.

For Ivins and Dubose, Bush is simply a likeable guy who traded on his father's name to get ahead. "In fact," they write, "one could argue that he's never really done anything else." Yet despite inces-

sant jibes about "the poor boy who started with just a tiny trust fund," Bush doesn't come across this way. He was not as successful as his father in the oil business (always referred to as "bidness" in this book), but he seems infinitely more at home in the rough and tumble of politics.



Interestingly, Ivins and Dubose don't deal with the matter of the gender gap; for the first time in many years, the Republican candidate is as appealing to women as the Democrat. I like to think that's because women see through the demagoguery of the Democratic nanny state rather than because they respond to that sexy twinkle in W.'s eye; but perhaps I underestimate the erotic appeal of a pair of cowboy boots.

Oddly too, the authors let Bush off the hook on what this reviewer does regard as an unattractive exercise in employing Daddy's influence: his failure to serve in Vietnam. Bush served instead in the Texas Air National Guard, a unit that at one time or another included sons of Lloyd Bentsen and John Connally. "It is not George W. Bush's fault that he was born into the class the system was designed to protect," they observe. What they really object to is that this "son of privilege" never became a guilt-ridden liberal.

Does all this mean that Bush is a phony when he calls himself a compassionate conservative? Ivins and Dubose call this claim "half true." If you think it is "punitive" to try to "move people off welfare into jobs that pay a minimum wage" or to keep the likes of Robert Hudspeth behind bars, then you agree with them. But if you think that real compassion means keeping people like Hudspeth locked up for as long as the law allows or forcing people to forsake the culture of poverty, then you don't.

Shrub reveals Bush as the genuine anti-Clinton. His meanness is a sign that he can lead—he's willing to be disliked and, unlike Clinton, won't take a poll every time he has to go to the bathroom. Bush will be able to make the tough calls a president must make. After eight years of Bill Clinton's creepy sentimentality, a little toughness would be a refreshing change.

NR

Killing Me Softly

CATHY YOUNG

The Kinder, Gentler Military: Can America's Gender-Neutral Fighting Force Still Win Wars?, by Stephanie Gutmann (Scribner, 300 pp., \$25)

ON an obstacle course in Navy basic training, several female recruits dangle from the steel bars, unable to do the pull-ups. Some men help out by grabbing their legs and pumping them up and down: This is considered "teamwork." To amused eyewitness Stephanie Gutmann, this surreal scene exemplifies something gone terribly wrong with our armed forces.

In *The Kinder, Gentler Military*, Gutmann, a journalist and first-time author, takes a skeptical look at the recent push

'Queasiness at the thought of an organized, government-sanctioned use of women to kill and be killed comes out of hardwired instinct.'

for gender integration in the U.S. military—an effort that, she believes, runs up against the intractable realities of biological difference, with devastating effects on morale and readiness.

In the mainstream media, the advancement of women in the military is generally treated as a success story marred only by the resistance of Neanderthal males. Can Gutmann's passionate polemic, based on research and observation, make a dent in this orthodoxy? Gutmann doesn't really help her case by making it clear that she's not too sympathetic to the goal of equality, at least if understood as the blurring of

Ms. Young is the author of *Ceasefire! Why Women and Men Must Join Forces to Achieve True Equality*.

male and female roles. This, to her, implies a dull and even "chilling" androgyny. She seems rather nostalgic for the idea of the military as an arena that allows men to take pride in doing something women can't. She believes that "queasiness . . . at the thought of an organized, government-sanctioned use of women to kill and be killed comes out of hardwired instinct," and that we must cherish this instinct.

It's quite possible that one reason this argument strikes me as injudicious is that I don't agree with it. It seems to me that under the most gender-neutral public policies, both our individual diversity and our indelible sexual identity will save us from "bland sameness." I admit to a certain "queasiness" at the notion of special protections for women—whether of the feminist or conservative variety—and of treating men's lives as less precious. (I also suspect Gutmann overstates male eagerness to charge into battle; surely most of the men who have fought in most of humanity's wars have not done so willingly.)

But leaving that aside, Gutmann's appeal to traditional ideals of manhood and womanhood seems most likely to impress those who already oppose the new role of women in the military, while alienating many of the unconverted. That's a pity, because Gutmann makes a strong case, on practical rather than philosophical grounds, against the present approach to gender integration—and offers recommendations that most reasonable people can endorse.

Psychological sex differences can be endlessly debated, but the male-female disparity in size and strength is a clear and inconvenient fact for champions of gender integration. The official denial of it means that many women hold military jobs that sometimes require lifting 80–100 pounds, a task that only about 15 percent of women soldiers can actually perform. Thought physical norms are diluted, female soldiers suffer dramatically higher rates of injury. Gutmann also worries that efforts to accommodate women lead to an unmanly coddling of recruits: This not only leaves recruits ill prepared for field conditions, but fails to provide the rigors and chal-

lenges that many of them, especially men, crave.

And then there's sex. As Gutmann caustically observes, we are meant to believe that men and women, properly trained and sensitized, "can eat, sleep, tent, march, and haul load together like a merry band of brothers without the fireworks and histrionics that have characterized sexual . . . er, gender . . . relations throughout human history."

Is it possible for the military to incorporate significant numbers of women in important roles without taking leave of common sense?

Sometimes, sex in the "New Military"—along with the resulting pregnancies—seems to be accepted as inevitable; at other times, the party line is that all sexual dynamics can and must be eliminated as a threat to unit cohesion.

No less schizophrenically, the dogma that women and men are essentially alike coexists with the assumption that sexuality is something imposed by brutish males on innocent females. This attitude, Gutmann shows, dominated the response to the Tailhook scandal, and later to liaisons between female Army trainees and male sergeants—resulting in shocking injustices toward some men. The zeal to protect women from anything that could be construed as harassment makes a mockery of equal treatment and seems far more paternalistic than the exclusion of women from combat.

Thus it turns out that the "gender-neutral" military is not gender-neutral at all. Says one exasperated former servicewoman, "There was this doublethink with women being *both* excellent warriors, ready to kill the enemy, *and* delicate wallflowers who will fall apart at a joke and had to have gender-normed grading and different [physical] tests with less push-ups."

Still, the situation may not be quite as dire as Gutmann claims; nor are all the woes of the "New Military" necessarily

gender-related. Softened-up basic training may be simply a misguided attempt to accommodate a generation with less respect for authority and more self-indulgent habits. The drop in Navy pilot-retention rates in the late 1990s may have been due to better opportunities in the civilian economy, not just feminist witch-hunts (Gutmann's own statistics suggest that attrition was comparable a decade earlier, before Tailhook). Nevertheless, Gutmann marshals plenty of evidence that concerns about the effectiveness of our coed fighting force are justified.

Is it possible for the military to incorporate significant numbers of women in important roles without taking leave of common sense? Many servicemen and especially servicewomen quoted in *The Kinder, Gentler Military*, while scathingly critical of the "female-friendly" policies of the last decade, are confident that with the right approach, men and women can indeed serve together effectively. Gutmann stresses that women have performed well, and become indispensable, in support positions; she also observes that quite a few military women are more "warriorlike in spirit . . . than a portion of the New Military's corporation men." Indeed, most of her specific recommendations are "equity feminist" more than traditionalist: restore tough and fair standards in training, ensure that all military personnel are qualified for their jobs, end recruiting quotas for women. While demanding a rollback of the gender-related "innovations" of the 1990s, she explicitly exempts the new permission for women to pilot combat planes. The one sex-differentiated policy Gutmann advocates is separate basic training; but that is no more "discriminatory" than sex-segregated college basketball.

It is to be hoped that *The Kinder, Gentler Military* will reinject some tough questions into the often sugarcoated discussion of women in the military, even if the answers may be different from the ones proposed here. As Gutmann points out, "The armed forces exist to defend us and advance our interests," not to resolve our debates about sex roles. On this basic fact, reasonable people should be able to agree, whichever side they take in these debates.

NR



■ ART ■

Achtung, Baby

RICHARD BROOKHISER

WHEN you leave the industrial-sized elevator at the top floor of the 2000 Biennial Exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, you see on the wall in front of you these words: The Biennial, its sponsors declare, "will draw both praise and censure. Contemporary art rarely elicits an indifferent response, since it is an art about our time, a mirror of our foibles, fears and fantasies. It speaks to us, about us, and—to future viewers—for us."

Here we go again: the *Salon des Refusés*, Judge Woolsey's decision on *Ulysses*—all the bedtime stories of the avant-garde. This year the focal point is *Sanitation*, a piece by Hans Haacke, a German artist who lives in New York City, which attacks Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, assorted conservatives, and the Nazis. *Sanitation* is intended as a response to the recent fracas over the Brooklyn Museum's *Sensation* exhibit, which was headlined by Chris Ofili's *Holy Virgin Mary*. The Haacke/Biennial fracas has already featured comments by the mayor, the withdrawal by a lesser Whitney heir of her patronage from the museum, and the circling of wagons by the other Whitneys, and the art world.

Since I do not regularly attend Whitney Biennials, I will not pass judgment on the rest of the show. There were movies, a few science projects, and a sad little pink roadster with doilies on its hubcaps. Some pieces worked as jokes. Yukinori Yanagi reproduced Jasper Johns's early Pop Art icon *Three Flags* (which the Whitney bought for \$1 million in 1980) in the materials of an ant farm. The three Old Glories were made out of red, white, and blue sand, or whatever ant farms are made of, and the busy little inhabitants were already tunneling through them. Since that 20-year-old investment in Jasper Johns has

probably appreciated handsomely, I hope they put the ants in the right piece.

The rest of the show is worth seeing if only to emphasize that the Haacke is a dog even in this manger. The piece is dull and stolid, and wordy as a Herblock cartoon. In a small, dark room sit twelve gray plastic garbage containers. A soft recording of marching feet plays. On the walls hang six quotations—three from Giuliani, one each from Pat Buchanan, Pat Robertson, and Sen. Jesse Helms. The typeface is a Gothic font called Fraktur, which you last saw in an old movie spelling "*Achtung! Die Villains sind hier!*" The fraktured right-wingers are commenting on the folly of spending public money on lousy art. "Civilization," says Rudy, "has been about trying to find the right place to put excrement, not on the walls of museums." Helms says, "No tax fund shall be used for garbage just because some self-appointed 'experts' have been foolish enough to call it 'art.'" Pat B. calls the First Amendment "the last refuge of the modern scoundrel." On the floor lies a framed copy of the First Amendment in Ye Olde Script, with Congress spelled Congrefs. On the floor—get it?

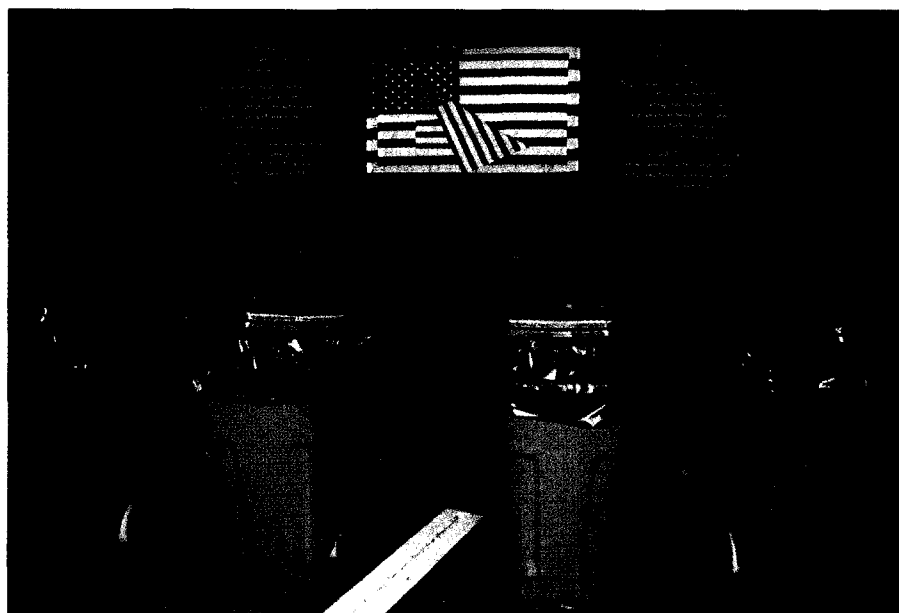
Haacke, born in Cologne in 1936, is the third oldest artist in the Biennial. Most of the people in the show were born when *Leave It to Beaver* was in reruns. Maybe the dullness of *Sanitation*

is due to the fact that Haacke is getting a little long in the tooth for this line of work. Around the corner from *Sanitation* were three paintings by Lisa Yuskavage, which were pretty awful, but at least had half-naked women in them.

Or perhaps Haacke is bad because he has gone too establishment. He lives in the East Village, but belongs to the faculty of Cooper Union, a design and technical college. The *Village Voice* reported that, thanks to the privatization policies of the Giuliani administration, Haacke is now part-owner, at bargain prices, of a formerly subsidized loft building in a happening neighborhood. Bohemia isn't what it used to be.

■
The difference between Hans Haacke and Jackie Mason? Mason is telling a joke; Haacke is one.
■

Outside *Sanitation* three TV camera crews were setting up. More passed through the lobby, and a truck with a pop-up broadcast antenna had parked on Madison Avenue. Scattered through the museum, anxious curators in black suits told reporters they hoped that the other artists in the show would not be overlooked. Sincerely? Haacke is like a come-on at a carnival; the bearded lady



Sanitation, by Hans Haacke

Doug Kanter/APP

might not otherwise pull in the crowds.

The unmerited brouhaha over *Sanitation* is partly the result of taking Haacke too seriously, i.e. seriously. Mayor Giuliani and Abraham Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League suggested that Haacke's invocation of Nazi imagery trivialized Nazism and its victims. But what doesn't Haacke trivialize? There is nothing lighter in weight than an earnest and stupid man. Haacke can't tell the difference between banning speech and withdrawing subsidies. He probably doesn't know the Holocaust from a hole in the ground. Real sacrilege requires some power of thought or expression. The routine F-words of soldiers or prisoners cannot be true obscenity. Thirty blocks from the Whitney, Jackie Mason routinely calls spectators who arrive late for his Broadway show "Nazi bastards." The only difference is that Mason is telling a joke; Haacke is one.

But mostly the flap reflects the infantile narcissism of modern artists, and public weariness with it. The last time we had such a fight—was it crucifixes in urine, queer penises, or dung Madonnas?—Robert Hughes, the always lively critic, wrote a boisterous essay in *Time* seeking to shame any peckerwood who might object to any subsidy whatever. The federal government has been supporting the arts, Hughes declared, since Congress paid John Trumbull \$32,000 in 1817 to do four large canvasses of the American Revolution for the Rotunda of the Capitol. Since Hughes invoked Trumbull, and Haacke invokes the First Amendment, which was passed during Trumbull's lifetime, let's look at the comparison.

John Trumbull served as a staff officer in the Revolution, holding the rank of colonel. His self-portrait shows him with both his palette and brushes and his sword, but it is the sword that he clasps. When, as an old man, he gave his paintings to Yale University he stipulated that he be buried beneath his standing portrait of George Washington after the Battle of Trenton; his gravestone, on the floor below the gallery, describes him as a "Friend of Washington." The profession of painting, he admitted to Thomas Jefferson, "as it is generally practiced, is frivolous, little

useful to society, and unworthy of a man who has talents for more serious pursuits. But, to preserve and diffuse the memory of the noblest series of actions which have ever presented themselves in the history of man" would, he believed, "give a dignity" to it. Not everyone thought Trumbull succeeded—John Randolph called his painting *The Declaration of Independence* the "shin-piece," because of all the Founders' stockinged legs on view. But Washington, Jefferson, Adams, and Madison encouraged him in his project.

Now artists turn out excretions and op-ed pieces and call anyone who pitches them off the gravy train a Nazi. Progress. NR

■ FILM ■

Miniskirted Crusader

JOHN SIMON

MANY who concede that Julia Roberts is beautiful doubt whether she can act. Yet though probably not destined for Shakespeare and Sophocles, she has been dependable on screen. With *Erin Brockovich*, she should persuade even doubting Thomases that she is both a movie star (lovely, sexy, adored by the camera) and an actress (damn talented).

This is the true story of an ex-Miss Wichita, twice divorced and the mother of three, who, guiltless in a nasty traffic accident, is nevertheless awarded no compensation for her injuries. With not even enough money for baby-sitters, she browbeats the middle-aged ambulance chaser Ed Masry, who lost the court case, into at least giving her a job. Erin Brockovich is tall and toothsome, dresses in the miniest of skirts, and lets part of her bra, much of her bosom, and all of her feelings hang out. Under stress, she becomes foulmouthed, which may have helped lose her case for her and adds to her unpopularity with her office mates.

Though hired at a low salary with no benefits, she goes at her file clerk's job

with a determination lacking in many with a better education and legal training. She is puzzled by the inclusion of medical records in some dossiers and, on impulse, visits some claimants in the little town of Hinkley. Its adults and children suffer from a cornucopia of ghastly maladies, caused, as she slowly figures out, by Chromium 6, a toxic substance Pacific Gas & Electric is dumping there. The sick are uneager to talk to lawyers, but Erin's earthiness and compassion wins them over, and she compiles a list of grievances that convinces even the hard-boiled Ed Masry. The zeal to do right by others—with profit also to himself—captures him, and he and Erin become a droll detective team.

Looking for someone to watch her kids while she is away, Erin hooks up with George, a biker neighbor, who genuinely likes children, and also enjoys an affair with her. Yet as her pursuit of evidence against PG&E becomes all-consuming, she loses the finally restive George, for whom she has come to care. Meanwhile, as the damage claims become bigger, Ed joins up with a major specialist law firm, but most of the grunt work still devolves on Erin.

This is where the scenarist Susannah Grant and the director Steven Soderbergh could fall into the trap of the stereotypical David vs. Goliath story—but it is impressive how many clichés

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With *Erin Brockovich*, Julia Roberts demonstrates that she is both a movie star and an actress.
■

they largely manage to avoid. The byplay between Erin and Ed, pawkily played by the wily veteran Albert Finney, always sparkles; Erin's investigations in Hinkley and elsewhere are honestly suspenseful; the reactions of the locals, whose ailments are graphically but unexploitatively portrayed, ring true; minor characters have lives of their own, notably a suspicious and uncooperative woman splendidly played by Cherry Jones. The subsidiary lawyers on both sides of what becomes a

\$333 million case are vividly characterized, and you feel for the put-upon George (nicely played by Aaron Eckhart) and the loved but neglected Brockovich children.

Soderbergh has always been an annoyingly gimmicky director, sometimes almost unbearable. Here, however, he restrains himself, and though he is still keen on tricky cuts and dissolves and the odd *recherché* camera angle, these manage to entice rather than interfere. He has rounded up fine supporting players, notably Marg Helgenberger as a woman afflicted with cancer, Veanne Cox as a frostily buttoned-up lawyer, and Tracey Walter as Erin's seeming stalker. And the joy at the victims' hard-won victory that the movie communicates is as infectious as Chromium 6, and much more salubrious.

■ Scott Spencer, an irritating novelist, seems to be writing variants of his quasi-autobiographical novel over and over. After *Endless Love*, made into a sappy movie by Franco Zeffirelli, comes Keith Gordon's version of *Waking the Dead*, a slightly different dud. Again, a brilliant young man from the wrong side of the Chicago tracks loves and loses a dazzling girlfriend. Here the Spencer surrogate is Fielding Pierce, who rises from Coast Guard officer, through Harvard-graduated lawyer, to senatorial candidate while romping and roughhousing with his hippie-activist lover, Sarah.

The action keeps switching between the '70s and the '80s without achieving much more than jarring discontinuity. Right at the start, Sarah, who has been involved in organizing resistance in Chile, is killed by a terrorist car bomb, so that her and Fielding's sexual cavortings and political disagreements are all in flashback. Robert Dillon's screenplay must, on top of that, like Spencer's prose, oscillate between the coyly sentimental and the pseudo-hardnosedly realistic. The cinematography and production values are fine, but any semblance of worth is lost when the film switches to random posthumous appearances by Sarah, leaving unre-



solved whether they are somehow for real or merely Fielding's hallucinations.

Now you can, if you must, write a ghost story; or you can write a psychodrama about posthumous obsession. But you cannot have it both ways. Under Gordor's routine direction, Billy Crudup is engaging, but Jennifer Connelly, an unremarkable actress, looks rather too boyish here. At times, it seems as if Fielding were making love to a man.

■ Bringing out a successful filmmaker's earlier works can be risky. Tom Tykwer's *Run Lola Run* was a hit for its idiosyncratic radicalism, but lacked more than just the commas in its

■
The dialogue in *Winter Sleepers* is uninspired, the favorite word being *Scheisse*, the vulgar word for excrement.
■

English title. The German director's earlier *Winter Sleepers* (1997) is mostly about a quartet of young men and women who sleep with one another but have difficulties with really loving, and hurtle into misunderstandings, unwarranted jealousy, and violence.

It takes place in a picturesque ski resort and, particularly, a villa full of campy artifacts. René, a movie projectionist, has lost his short-term memory and keeps taking Polaroids to remind him of his yesterdays. Marco, a lecherous ski instructor, is carrying on tumultuously with Rebecca, a translator, whose housemate, Laura, a nurse and aspiring actress, becomes involved with René. When René absconds with Marco's new sports car for a spin on wintry roads, he causes a crash in which Theo, a local farmer with grave financial troubles, loses both a prize horse and a small daughter who had stowed away in the horse trailer. Theo vows to get revenge, but the car is lost in a snow bank, wasn't driven by its owner, and René ran away unidentified from the accident.

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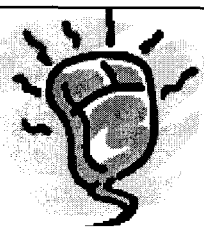
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I won't rehearse the convoluted plot based on a novel by Anne-Françoise Pyszora, but will note that too many elements are too willfully tied together. The dialogue is uninspired, by far the favorite word being *Scheisse*, the vulgar word for excrement. Tykwer goes for the gratuitously bizarre: a man taking a shower is shot horizontally; another, suicidally skiing off a mountain, flies seemingly forever. There is a happy ending that belies all that went before, and the actors are either unmemorable or not given much chance to display ability.

The film's title derives from the name of a local hangout, the *Winterschläfer* bar, a word that in German means not so much winter sleepers as hibernators. The dramatis personae, we are to understand, are leading a half-life comparable to hibernation, from which some are arbitrarily roused, others, equally arbitrarily, not. The only thing that makes sense is Frank Griebel's spectacular cinematography, wasted on a sleeping dog of a film that should have been let lie.

NR



BOOKS IN BRIEF

My Goodness: A Cynic's Short-lived Search for Sainthood, by Joe Queenan (Hyperion, 208 pp., \$21.95)

JOE QUEENAN has built a journalistic career on savagely funny attack pieces. The premise of his latest book is that he has grown sick of being a mean guy and has made a fundamental life choice: He will devote his life to being more like Susan Sarandon.

Sarandon is one of his metaphors for the contemporary culture's love of ostentatious goodness. Queenan writes:

One of the best things about being an altruistic person in the age of MSNBC is that one's good deeds are not likely to be forgotten. Saint Margaret was supposedly eaten by a dragon and then beheaded during the reign of Diocletian, thus becoming one of the most popular saints in medieval Europe. Yet historians and even certain hagiographers now debate whether she ever existed. . . . By contrast, we know that Whoopi

Goldberg and Robin Williams hosted *Comic Relief IV* . . . and no future generation will ever be able to dispute that.

Comedy is a game of percentages, and if you hit consistently above .300, you're one of the all-time greats. What's endearing about this book is that, apart from the laugh-out-loud highlights, it generates a persistent smile in the reader.

The best source of highlights is a twelve-page section in which Queenan anthologizes the cruelest comments he made back when he was a bad guy.

Example: "I wished out loud that the director of *Mr. Holland's Opus* had ended his film the same way as *Braveheart*, with Richard Dreyfuss getting his entrails ripped out while a cast of thousands cheered." In the same section, Queenan apologizes to prostitutes: "In a 1991 *Movieline* article entitled 'Don't Try This at Home,' I tried to impersonate Richard Gere in *Pretty Woman* by asking an Eighth Avenue hooker if she would accompany me to a dinner with the CEO of a company I was taking over and pretend to be my ultra-sophisticated companion. Working girls don't need this kind of crap."

This gag is one of the more successful examples of the book's approach. The device of a neo-nice guy's apology allows him to incinerate all over again the true target of his wrath, which is, of course, not prostitutes but the producers of Hollywood bilge. Here's another impressive layering of ironies:

[Convicted cop-killer] Mumia [Abu-Jamal] fell into the same general category as Tawana Brawley and Rigoberta Menchú: public figures who had achieved the almost impossible task of becoming mythological figures while still alive, even though the exploits they were being mythologized for never actually happened. But hey, did anyone seriously believe that Hercules had cleaned the Augean stables by diverting a river?

Comedy is difficult work, but Queenan marshals the necessary appearance of effortlessness; the result is a winner.

—MICHAEL POTEMRA

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

So What About Bob Jones U.?

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 22

IT is not widely noticed that the weaknesses and insufficiencies of bumper-sticker political exegesis seem often to influence just the people we'd think absolutely immune from that kind of reductionism. But not only is it happening, in the case of one highbrow pundit it is actually being encouraged.

George W. Bush delivers a speech at Bob Jones University. Now there is only one legitimate question to raise here. It is: Does George W. Bush himself incline to those idiosyncratic views of life that distinguish Bob Jones U. from other fundamentalist Christian colleges?

Well, perhaps Jones U. is not absolutely unique, but it is certainly odd. 1) It interprets the Bible as frowning on miscegenation and therefore forbids interracial dating. 2) It considers the Catholic religion deeply flawed.

Now the business of intermarriage is delicate. But to suppose that the prejudices of Bob Jones are unique is to disclose a great ignorance of American social mores. There is intermarriage all the time, between races and between religions. What is wrong is to suppose that there is no opposition to such marriage. Prominent Jews speak routinely about the great danger to their faith in intermarriage, the children of which tend to become Christian. To suppose that white parents are entirely indifferent to the marriage of their children to blacks among other things trivializes black complaints about the burden of being black in America. If there is such a burden (and there is), then why should it be sought out by the young man or woman setting out to create a family?

The special offense of Bob Jones, then, is to have proffered Biblical sanction for prejudices which are universal.

And on the matter of anti-Catholicism: It is implicit in a profound attachment to Protestantism that Catholicism is at the very least a mistaken theological road. Four hundred years ago great wars were fought between advocates of the different religions. If Bob Jones's faculty or curriculum preaches the denial to Catholics of their civil rights, that is one thing. But Bob Jones

has not been revealed as a terrorist campus, preaching the need to obviate others' rights; so then what is one left with?

The entirely political question which, if faced by adults passing sober judgments, would be something on the order of: Because there are ignorant people in America who will try to construe an appearance at Bob Jones by a presidential candidate as indifference to the right of anybody to marry anybody else, and the right of Catholics to practice their religion—therefore Bush should have stayed away.

But the proper call would have been to instruct, belittle, console, and, if necessary, attack those who are willing to translate Bush's appearance at Bob Jones into a mark of indifference to civil rights.

It is one thing for James Carville to interpret the visit as deep with meaning about the true inside thoughts of Gov. Bush. But it is the responsibility of those who know better (which includes James Carville; it isn't that Carville doesn't know better, it is that he elects not to act better) to cry out, Bah Humbug!

Yet the *New York Times's* William Safire, a learned moralist, advised Sen. McCain to "Make Bob Jones U. the scene of 'the Bush surrender.'" Merely by appearing at Bob Jones, is the reasoning here, Bush made concessions to the Christian Right which he must now be made to pay for.

The word gets around that Mr. Bush will have to pay for his victories to the extent they are attributable to the Christian Right. Pay in what way? Pay, the syllogism would suggest, in forfeited votes among the non-Christian Right. But there is something missing here, an undistributed middle. If it were so that a victory by Bush would mean an end to a woman's right to have an abortion, then the threat would be real. If endorsement by the Christian Right meant an end to

religious liberty for non-Christians, then indeed the moment would have arrived to hail Bush at Bob Jones as a revelation of his dark designs.

What McCain proceeds to do with the Bob Jones incident will tell us something about him, as a man of honor. The pity of it is that there are honorable men engaged in urging dishonorable behavior by someone running for president of the United States.

Two Debates Per Week?

NEW YORK, MARCH 10

THE challenge tossed out by Al Gore to George Bush should be rejected for reasons given and for reasons not given.

George Bush can say, without any problem of implausibility, that in political campaigns people express themselves in different ways. Whatever objections one might have to the objurgative mode, it does in fact say something. "We Love Bush" is bumper-sticker rhetoric, but so is "You Are My Valentine," to say nothing of "Don't Let Them Immanentize the Eschaton." The bumper sticker used in Connecticut in 1988 remains in the memory as pure political art. It read, "Does Lowell Weicker Make You Sick?" One may deplore the choice of such means of communicating one's partisanship, but that isn't reason enough to ask an opponent to forego the money raised to promote such sentiments, at bumper-sticker length or at the slightly longer length done for TV commercials of 15 or 30 seconds.

And then Mr. Bush can say that the debates, under current rules, are pretty asphyxiative. The one-minute/two-minute responses to questions popped from a journalist or by the contending partner require concisions of views that not only don't do justice to many questions, but encourage an expeditiousness of formulation that can undermine their complexity. Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas required more than one hour to give their views in such a way as to do them justice. John Milton could not have transformed the *Areopagitica* into 60 seconds of free-speech endorsement.

But to the charge that Bush is saying all that stuff because he doesn't want to confront Mr. Gore, he has the most plausible of all replies: He is going to do exactly that



"No, I don't have any useful skills, but I have great self-esteem."

in the regular three debates which have become the convention of presidential contests.

Now the above is all sayable in public company. What is not sayable goes to the heart of the difference between a conservative's approach to political reality and that of a liberal. The distinction was made artfully by the late Edward Banfield, the learned and witty economist who gave us *The Unheavenly City*.

The point is well expressed by the "Monday"/"Tuesday" metaphor. The liberals' specialty is to appeal to immediate desires and satisfactions.

Al Gore, of his own prompting, but also especially goaded by the instant-welfarism of Sen. Bradley, responsible for his excited political flurry early in the year, will lean heavily—as so many of his Democratic predecessors have done—on the Pleasant Thought approach to national policy. The point has already been fondled by Vice President Gore that all children should be protected from medical adversity. A second Pleasant Thought is that no one in America should be uninsured for medical services.

Now the Monday approach to such questions, Prof. Banfield reminded us, goes: "You want it? Monday you shall have it." The Tuesday approach, which harmonizes with conservative leanings to prudence, a weighing of contending priorities, and an examination of national and regional resources, tells us: Say no on Monday, that is a Tuesday problem. The metaphors pack a big punch in any setting inherently conducive to populist formulations.

The candidate who says that he will see to it that Jim Crow is ended the month he comes to power gets applause and generates enthusiasm that isn't generated by the candidate who says Jim Crow should be ended but that it's going to take time, will require legislation, and also judicial readings of laws that expose the inherent impositions of Jim Crow. The candidate who says, in the manner of Bill Clinton, I will not *accept* an America that lets little children die for lack of medical attention and all that will end the day I exercise critical power—has a capacity to rouse different emotions from the candidate who says: Medical protections are expanding, but the key to their continuing to do so is to encourage medical research, the freedom of doctors, and the sovereignty of consumers.

That is Tuesday-talk. Although it carries an inherent feel of authenticity, it isn't a show-stopper. It is correct that Americans have profoundly conservative instincts, which encourage them to doubt

talismanic approaches to social problems. But it is also true that in quickie debates, the Monday approach appeals most quickly.

To encourage two debates every week, if they were to begin now, would mean a staggering 68 debates. Such mass exposure to the Monday epidemic Gov. Bush would not, and should not, want.

On Forgiveness and Tolerance

NEW YORK, MARCH 14

THE business about apologizing for past and prospective sins of racial, religious, or ethnic slight has surely got out of balance. Pope John Paul II's comprehensive "apology" for historical sins did not get universal applause for several reasons, foremost among them that he declined to be specific. Some thought he should have listed the Inquisition, others the Holocaust, still others the tacit and sometimes explicit position that there is no salvation other than through the Church. Here the Pope was obviously guided by the maxim, *inclusio unius est exclusio alterius*. If you start listing things, you're going to leave something out.

Another reason for dissatisfaction (e.g., my own) has to do with presumptive innocence and a tiny alarm bell going off at the idea of guilt for one's father's sins. A while ago President Clinton traveled to Africa and apologized for everything from slavery to the minimum wage. The impact of that auto-da-fé was to stimulate not contrition but cynicism. That doesn't work with the Pope, who is not running for reelection. The Pope gives greater attention to moral questions in an hour than Mr. Clinton has given in a lifetime.

Still, the clamor aroused by the Pope's homily plays into appetites both prurient and mischievous. Consider, now, what many are laboring to transform into a historical engagement, namely the appearance of George W. Bush at Bob Jones University. It is becoming something on the order of Bush's Munich. It is even being suggested that he name a Catholic vice-presidential candidate in order to dispose of any suspicion that he harbors deep anti-Catholic prejudices in his heart.

Slate magazine, in its now sparkling tradition, cites novel reactions to the Bob Jones business and passes on cool commentary on the business of giving public offense. Suppose, Andrew

Sullivan speculates, that candidate Gore were to appear in the company of Louis Farrakhan; what would happen to him? The hypothetical answer: He would disappear from the face of the earth, the Democratic party would cremate him and spit on his ashes. By contrast, Mr. Sullivan, a Catholic seeking reason to take offense, cites the apparent immunity of politicians who appear at Bob Jones University (where I once lectured). Sen. Strom Thurmond accepted an honorary degree there, as also Sen. John Ashcroft and Sen. Jesse Helms. President Reagan spoke there, as also Vice President Dan Quayle and Patrick Buchanan.

The author pulls out the website of Bob Jones which advises the curious that the Catholic Church "is not another Christian denomination. It is a satanic counterfeit, an ecclesiastic tyranny over the souls of men, not to bring them to salvation but to hold them bound in sin and to hurl them into eternal damnation. It is the old harlot of the Book of the Revelation—the Mother of Harlots."

What surprises isn't that some Catholics (Buchanan, me) and a number of distinguished Protestants have lectured at Bob Jones, it is that Bob Jones would have on campus a) subscribers to the mother-of-harlots religion, and b) presidents and vice presidents who ignore the 60 million Americans who subscribe to the mother-of-harlots faith.

The point can be made that there is a double standard—Farrakhan is pretty categorically boycotted, Bob Jones is not. But the point is polemically opportunistic. Nobody knew anything about Bob Jones and the mother-of-harlots business until researchers for John McCain decided to play with the idea that George Bush was soft on anti-Catholicism, for the purpose of encouraging Catholic Michigan voters to look suspiciously on George W.'s credentials in the primary campaign. Grownups know that nothing that approaches notice, let alone a menace, is said in the Bob Jones universe, whereas the Nation of Islam does reach out for the support of black Americans and has got itself over the years some formidable apostles, among them Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali.

What does truly offend is *The Sopranos* TV series. It is a categorical assault on Christian values, Christian decorum, and Christian dignity. It preaches the banality of hypocrisy and the speciousness of belief. We can't expect the Pope to apologize for *The Sopranos*, but it would be nice if somebody did.

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

FLORENCE KING

SOUTH CAROLINA'S Confederate-flag controversy has pushed me over the edge into a full-blown case of Rebel Fatigue.

"Fatigues" are the road rage of a political journey, those critical times when you can't stand it any longer and need to pull over and have an epiphany. Rebel Fatigue is the third Fatigue of my political life. The other two struck in the '60s.

My Ayn Rand Fatigue did not emerge as long as I did nothing but read her books. The trouble started when I attended a discussion group and found myself in a roomful of Rand-ites. The meeting was held in the apartment over mine, hosted by a neighbor I had never met but had seen in the lobby when she strode purposefully by me in a black cloak and snatched up her mail with one of those swift, sure gestures I had read so much about.

Her floor plan was identical to mine but she had no furniture; for a split second I thought I had been robbed. We all sat on the floor and listened to tapes from the Objectivist Institute. There were no refreshments, as the hostess was above all that. A couple of people went into the kitchen to get a glass of water, striding purposefully across her rugless floor and my ceiling, which explained a lot.

The discussion period consisted of people saying "A is A" and drawing dollar signs in the air to signify approval. The few tepid arguments that arose were settled by the hostess, who read aloud from her heavily underlined copy of *Atlas Shrugged*. Next, we listened to Rachmaninoff, Ayn Rand's favorite composer. Then all the individualists got up and went home.

My John Birch Fatigue was strikingly similar, except there was something to sit on. The room was full of funeral-parlor folding chairs and the fragrant smell of freshly sawed wood from the unpainted planks they used as bookcases for their stacks of "literature." Dom-

inating all was the biggest coffee urn I had ever seen outside of a diner. The woman next to me, a tired bleached blonde, saw me looking at it and leaned over and whispered, "The first time I came here, I thought it was an AA meeting."

That was the night LBJ announced that he wouldn't run. When the news came, the tired blonde heaved a deep sigh and said, "They've gotten to Johnson." "They had to get to him so they could get to Bobby Kennedy," said someone else. "They've already gotten to Nixon, so it's all set."

"None dare call it treason!" snarled the moderator. I had had it with folding chairs, bare floors, purposeful strides, and barrel-of-fun cell meetings. I wasn't cut out for the conservative fringe, yet the conservative mainstream was just as incompatible: God-'n'-country platitudes, suburban families, and Julie Nixon's wedding dress. That was the clincher, the symbol to end all symbols, an apocalyptic fifth horseman named Sweetness 'n' Light: I hadn't worn little puffed sleeves like that since I was 6.

I went into alienation panic. It was 1968, not a good year to look for the all-of-a-piece, elitist conservatism I craved, defined so exquisitely by T. S. Eliot: "classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and Anglo-Catholic in religion." It fit me like a glove—even, in my fashion, the last. But it was not to be found in American conservatism, and so I gave up my citizenship, as it were, and settled for being a Southerner.

The Southern woman's Rebel Fatigue starts the first time a man takes her on a tour of a Civil War battlefield. Yankee women don't have dates like this. He always picks the hottest or coldest day of the year, and his chivalry is superseded by his need for a pack horse. You have to help carry stuff: maps, binoculars, the works of Bruce Catton.

It takes about eight hours because he must stop and reflect in orotund tones. "Here" is never simply "here," but "right here" (raht'cheer) or "on this spot." His

language comes completely out of character, as oddly formal poetic locutions and archaic word reversals start popping out of him. "Here stood Lee." "Here it was that Lee stood." His vocabulary suddenly expands. When he describes a fight in a bar he chortles, "There was blood all over the place," but when he tours a battlefield he speaks grimly of "carnage." Afterwards he turns quiet and melancholy. It's like sex.

Speaking of which, you also spend a lot of boozy time listening to his Civil War music. This tends to stimulate Southerners, who respond to martial music the way normal people respond to love songs. Chances are excellent that you will end up in bed, boompings your little hearts out to the strains of "The Bonnie Blue Flag." (A more suitable beat, by the way, than "Dixie," almost as good as "The Light Cavalry Overture.")

Granted, this stage of my life was an improvement on the folding chairs, but it was no substitute for T. S. Eliot's credo. My political alienation eventually returned and I developed Rebel Fatigue, but it remained dormant until the South Carolina flag flap forced me to admit three things.

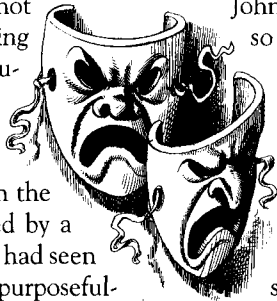
First, whitetrash have captured the Confederate flag. For every Walter Scott-reading history buff who sees it as heritage and tradition, there are thousands more who have it painted on their black leather jackets and tattooed on their arms.

Second, pro-flag arguments are getting insane, e.g., the letter to the *Washington Times* insisting that the flag does not symbolize slavery because Julia Dent Grant, wife of the Union general, was a slaveowner.

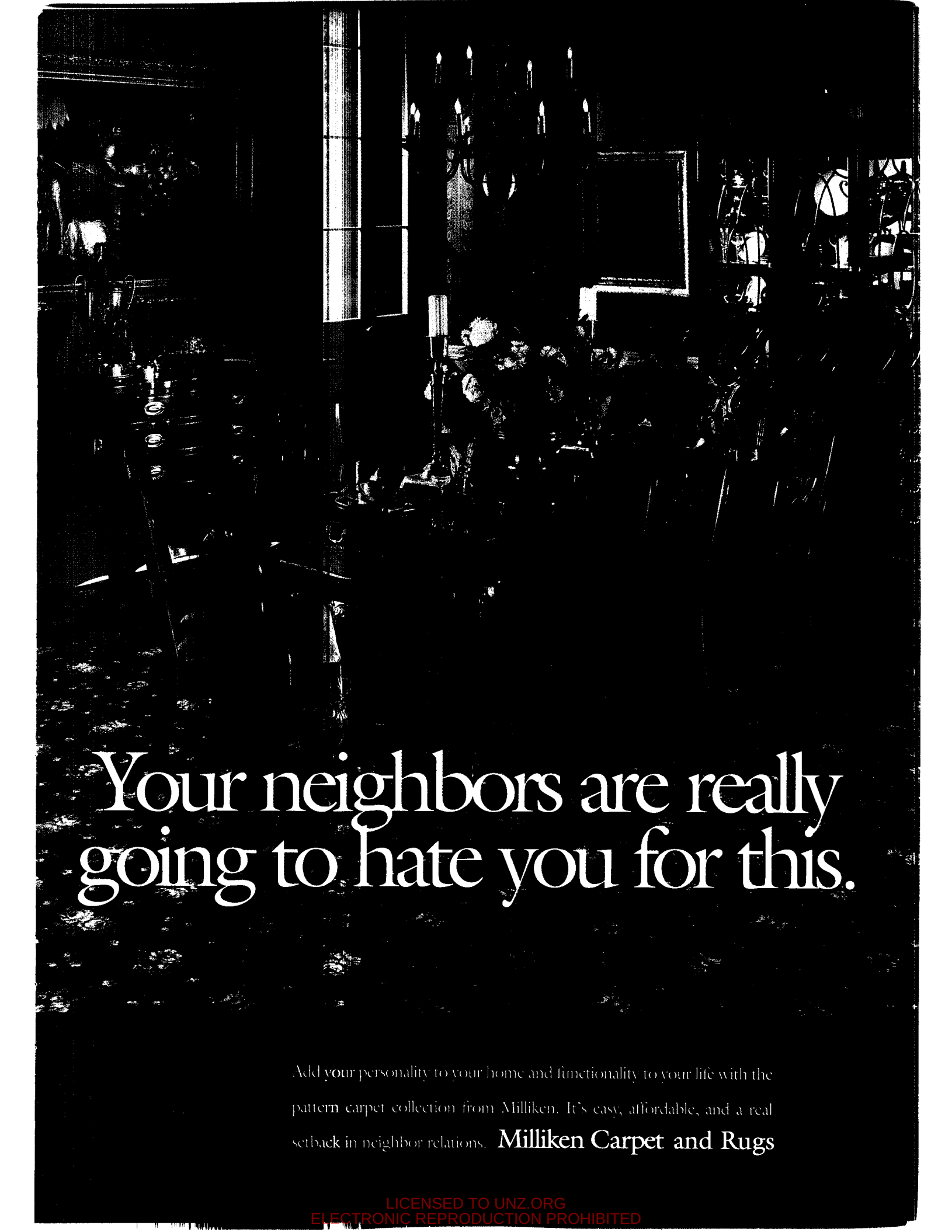
Finally, an aspect no one has yet mentioned: aesthetics. Flying three flags—national, state, and Confederate—on one pole is clutter, an unfurled whatnot stand. It puts me in mind of a clothes-crazy woman who, constantly running out of hangers, hangs one garment over another until she can't find the first one, and then sues the dry cleaner before she discovers what happened.

For God's sake, take it down before things get any sillier.

NR



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